DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 180 708 RC 011 739

AUTHOR	Nitsch, Twylah Hurd
TITLE	Wisdom of the Seneca.
INSTITUTION	New York State Education Dept., Albany.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	79
CONTRACT	G0077C0041
NOTE	86p.
AVAILABLE FROM	The University of the State of New York, The State Education Department, Bureau of Bilingual Education, Albany, NY 12234 (limited supply)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	American Indian Culture: *American Indian Education: *American Indian Literature: American Indian Studies: Cultural Background: *Curriculum Guides: Elementary Education: *Family Life: Games: Learning Activities: Legends: Life Style: Mythology: Self Actualization: *Values
IDENTIFIERS	American Indian History: *Seneca Nation

ABSTRACT

Written for students and teachers who want to learn more about Seneca history and culture, this booklet presents legends, games, and factual information about the way of life followed by the early Seneca. Introductory material discusses the philosophy of the Seneca, their view of Nature, and the role of legends in the early Clans. Part I contains nine selections on early life, each followed by a list of related activities for students. Topics include the physical features of the early Seneca, food, clothing, the layout of the village, the role of teachers, and the concept of self-discipline as practiced by the Clans. Suggested student activities range from questions for thought and discussion to projects such as building a miniature Seneca village, designing a long house, and preparing a typical Seneca meal. Part II contains traditional legends and games of the eight Clans. The legends feature the animal for which the Clan is named (wolf, bear, beaver, hawk, deer, heron, snipe, and turtle): each conveys a lesson for living in harmony with Nature. The games, testing coordination, endurance, teamwork, and concentration, require simple materials or none at all: they can be played by two players or by teams with any number of participants. The final section, "The Firefly and the Bear", is an example of a play that Seneca children put on for their parents. Line drawings and explanatory diagrams accompany the text. (JH)

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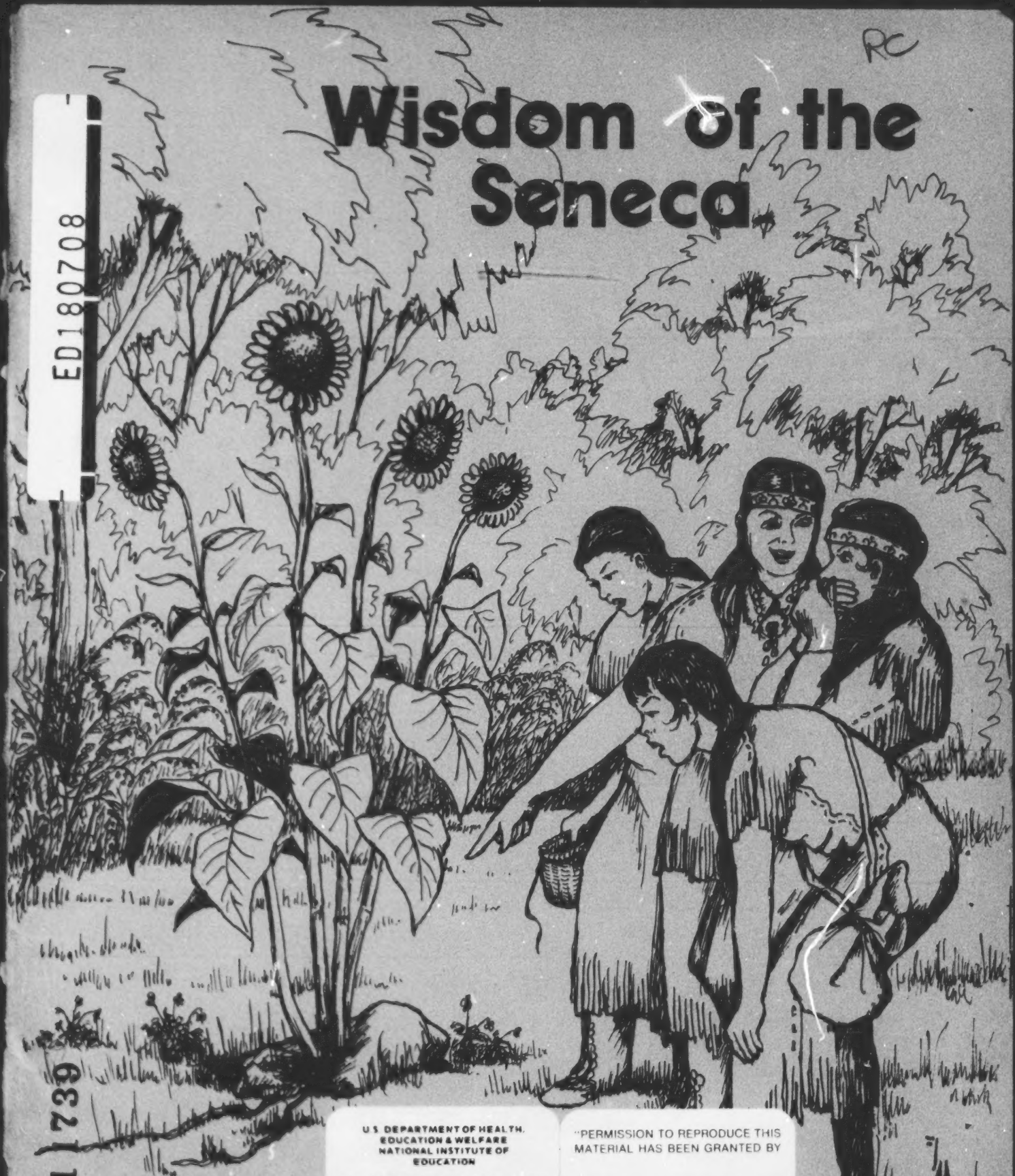

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WISDOM OF THE SENECA

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FOREWORD

Wisdom of the Seneca was written for students of all ages and teachers who wish to learn about early Seneca life.

Part I, Early Seneca Life, contains factual information on food, clothing, shelter and other aspects of daily life. Suggestions for "Things To Do" follow each section of Part I so that students can experience designing a longhouse, making a "Snack Wheel" and other culturally relevant activities.

Part II, Clan Legends, includes the legends of eight different Seneca clans which have been handed down from generation to generation, as well as the favorite games of each of the clans.

"The Firefly and the Bear," which follows Part II is a play which students can perform. It is an example of a play that Seneca children put on for their parents.

PREFACE

"THE LESSONS FROM THE PAST BECOME THE INSPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE"

Wisdom of the Seneca has been written to acquaint today's student with the family lifestyle of the early Senecas before the rapid transition into today's culture. We wish to uncover the wisdom that supported the family unit in terms of customs, education and goals and to see how much remains with us today.

In the distant past, each generation adjusted its living conditions to the changes that occurred in the environment. Knowledge emerged through these changes, enabling the early Senecas to realize a satisfying "Way of Life."

Observing and listening became a way of life. Soon, endless examples of perfection, splendor, dependability and harmony were observed on every side. These examples perpetuated a source of truth that formed a foundation upon which each person recognized his identity.

Da Naho (Now, it has been said)

Twylah Hurd Nitsch (Yeh-weh-node)*

*an Echo (The voice that rides on the winds)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

May I offer my sincere appreciation to Moses Shongo and Alice Pierce Shongo, my Seneca Indian grandparents, for the countless hours spent in revealing the wisdom of our people to me, their only grandaughter.

Whenever Moses Shongo was asked why he had not written a book, he answered: "Only when we have opened our eyes to see, opened our ears to hear, opened our minds to learn, opened our hearts to care, and opened our hands to serve, can the wisdom of our people be recorded and understood."

Today, Wisdom of the Seneca can be recorded because of the understanding of the following people: Sonya Boorady, who requested Seneca material for her Social Studies Classes; the encouragement of my parents, Maude Shongo Hurd and Raymond Hurd; my husband, Robert; our children, Janice Mogavero, Dianne Coville, Robert Nitsch, Jr., and James Nitsch; Jeanne Rindge, Director of Human Dimensions Institute, who suggested the title; Ernest Smith, who drew the illustrations; Janice Norman Boy, Donna Gruener, Marilyn Jemison Anderson (a Seneca) and Margery Weierbach, who did the typing; Carol Shevlin and Jane Lavayea, the original proof-readers; the Educational Foundation of the Seneca Nation, who issued the approval; and many others whose expertise has gone into the publication of this material.

Ann Lewis, of the New York State Education Department, desiring to serve our people, made the arrangements for the manuscript to be reviewed for educational purposes, Michael Fennell, of the Bureau of Bilingual Education, New York State Education Department edited the manuscript and coordinated the project; John A. Cooke, representating Native American Education for the Bureau, assisted with the final editing; and Laurie Wellman, of the Bureau of Bilingual Education prepared Wisdom of the Seneca for publication.

In addition, I wish to acknowledge the selfless time and effort of today's educators for their interest in gathering historical material of the original lifestyle of early Senecas. Also, I honor the generations of Seneca Indian teachers who, down through the ages, accepted their responsibility of passing on our family traditions, so that Wisdom of the Seneca can be read, enjoyed and understood today.

Twylah Hurd Nitsch

WISDOM OF THE SENECA

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PART I - EARLY SENECA LIFE

INTRODUCTION

A POWERFUL, MYSTERIOUS FORCE seemed to flow throughout all Creation. Without this Force, all Life would end. The body through which the Force was felt was Mother Earth.

Mother Earth was the caretaker of all Creation. The Senecas honored her in their thoughts and actions. Customs revolving around praise and thanksgiving were daily routines as the gifts of Mother Earth poured in to sustain all life.

The urge for more knowledge went into observing the habits of the birds, animals, fish and plants. Then, the Senecas watched the Sun, the greatest light, by day, and the Moon, the lesser light, by night. They gazed, in awe, at the Skyworld to behold the mystery of far-away bodies. These observations brought forth a belief that all things existed in PEACE AND HARMONY.

This belief created a feeling of togetherness, arranged by some Great unseen Force. Creatures and plants belonged to this Force and fitted into the arrangement in an unusual but harmonious way. The Senecas believed that if they watched how the birds, plants and animals lived, they, too, could fit into this same harmonious arrangement.

It was only natural that Mother Earth became the teacher. Imitating her cooperative patterns brought about the growth of the Clan families that changed life from roving bands to family groups living in longhouse villages.

The influence of Mother Earth drew everyone into one relationship that included:

- the belief of ONE SUPREME FORCE, the Great Mystery (renamed, the Great Spirit by the French)
- belonging to a Clan system that fostered family unity
- belonging to the family of Mother Earth through self-identity
- sharing equally the gifts of Mother Earth with all other creations
- following the creed of self-development through self-discipline

The Senecas finally secured a pattern of family relationship that has endured through the ages.

The early Senecas learned about this wisdom, prophesy and philosophy around the Council Fires where the teachers wore many "faces" (played many roles). They were called the People of Wisdom (Faith Keepers), the Clan Mothers, the Chiefs, the Sachems, the Story-tellers and the Medicine People.

We trust the information in this volume will case a new "Light of Understanding" on almost Forgotten Family heritage which has been gratefully recorded as it was told - with love, honor and respect.

About 200 years before the "discovery of America" in 1492, the Medicine People were the historians, or "Keepers of the Traditions." From time to time, they met in Council with other Medicine People to discuss ways to help them better serve the Family. It was the duty of the Medicine People to guard the traditions and to pass on the true heritage of their ancestors to each succeeding generation.

The Senecas lived in villages and enjoyed the surroundings for their hunting and fishing. This was a privilege that belonged to everyone.

If we visited a Seneca Indian village in those days, the people would greet us in their traditional welcome gesture. The left hand is held on the chest with the right hand over the left; arms are parallel with the shoulders.

"Nyah-weh-scanoh" is the greeting they used. This means, "I am grateful to see you are well." You would have been invited into the Senecas' longhouse and offered something to eat. This was the custom of the early Senecas. They were friendly and enjoyed having visitors.

To understand the early Seneca, we must remember that for generations their lives were influenced by the silence and peacefulness of Mother Earth. Living in harmony with Nature taught the Senecas self-control. They moved slowly but deliberately, spoke softly and cautiously and were habitually silent. Controlled silence was practiced from the time a Seneca was very young. It was considered an honorable characteristic.

Senecas learned to think before speaking. Making quick decisions often proved unwise. Developing wisdom was a goal every Seneca wished to obtain.

Seneca education depended solely upon Nature's lessons. Mother Earth was the caretaker of all creatures and plants. The woodland was the home of Mother Earth. Young Senecas visited the forests to listen to the "Sounds of the Woodlands." This was the place to learn the language of the animals and birds.

They watched the plant world and discovered that plants possessed feelings. Plants suffered disease and injury, causing them to wither and die. The Senecas believed that all people, creatures and plants were gifted with the same "Spirit of Nature", that each person, creature and plant held an honored place in Nature's family under the watchful care of Mother Earth. They believed that all things were born for a purpose and should be allowed to fulfill this purpose. Mother Earth was dependable and provided everyone with all they needed to be happy: food, clothing, shelter and pleasure.

As soon as Seneca youths had practiced survival in the forests, they would find a place of their own choosing. Each one did this without telling even their closest friends. Young girls found their personal place as well as the boys. Being alone with Mother Earth and thinking personal thoughts, helped each one understand the importance of following Nature's Plan. Solitary thinking developed self-confidence and self-reliance. Watching how the creatures of the forest lived together, sharing food and lodging places,

made the young people respect the gifts of Mother Earth. It showed them ways to adjust and adapt themselves to the environment in which they lived.

Visiting the forests and having a special place created a feeling of belonging to Nature's Plan. The love and respect for Mother Earth remains to this day.

Things To Do

LET'S MAKE BELIEVE

Let's sit in a circle with our legs crossed and be very quiet. Try not to move. Be so still that we can feel ourselves breathe. Now, let's clasp our hands and hold them in our laps. Think of being alone in the woods on a beautiful summer day. Smell the flowers listen to the rustle of the leaves as we sit on the moss covered earth. Is the breeze brushing across your face? Feel it moving your hair. Hear the birds singing. Now we'll close our eyes. Look at all the colors flashing before our closed eyes. Take a long, deep breath and enjoy the wonderful gifts that Mother-Earth has given us while we sit with her in the woods. Feel the happiness of being alone and ever so peaceful. We must not rush our thoughts. Listen to them speak like a whisper. We are the only ones who can hear them. These creative thoughts are treasures of our mind. We need to be very silent to hear them.

Even though we have not actually left our place, our thoughts took us on an imaginary trip into the woods. We'll return now and think of someone who is sitting in the circle with us. While our eyes are still closed, smile! Wait for a signal to open your eyes, then look at the one you were thinking of. Did the person you selected choose you? If so, you had a most interesting experience. This is a fun thing to do! It helps us to understand how the Seneca characteristics were molded by Nature. Also, why they liked to be known as "Nature People."

We have learned how the early Seneca began to use his creative ability. He believed that he was tapping into his highest intellectual self. To develop the mind was a goal of the early Seneca. Today our educational system has the same goal. Although the methods of development are different, the goals of this ancient culture and the culture of today are the same.

After our imaginary trip, shall we share like the Senecas did?

1. While sitting in the circle, was it hard not to move?
2. What did you say to yourself to keep from moving?
3. When other people moved, did you hear them?
4. What thoughts did you think about them or yourself?
5. Tell what you "saw" while your eyes were closed.
6. If you saw colors moving about, can you tell us what colors they were?
7. Did you actually feel that you were alone in the woods?
8. Could you smell different odors?
9. What kind of trees were in the woods?
10. Now that these questions have been asked, let's enter into the woods again and ask ourselves the above questions. This is the way the Senecas learned about themselves.

PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE EARLY SENECA INDIAN

OHN-GWE-OHN-WEH

The bronzed features of his face
Gave character reading of his grace.
The sparkle in his dark brown eyes
Beheld the depth of his spirit ties.
His agile body, strong and trim
Revealed the health that dwelled within.
Nature's influence on this race
Helped him thrive in his "Chosen Place."

Yeh-weh-node

The Seneca brave of yesterday was a picture of health. He was a happy, smiling individual because he thoroughly enjoyed his kind of life. His complexion was a honey tan. He was slender, stood straight and walked with his head held high. He was agile, for agility was valued over strength.

His face was oval with deep set dark brown eyes that sparkled when he smiled. He had high cheek bones and a straight nose. His teeth were strong, regular and exceptionally white.

Long, shiny black hair hung in braids along the cheeks of men, women and children. His forehead tended to be narrow. One outstanding feature of the early Seneca was the lack of hair on the faces of the men. Only three or four strands grew around his mouth and chin. Oftentimes the Seneca would simply rub them off with sandstone when they became too long.

The tanned skin of the Seneca was firm, smooth and finely textured. He had thin, tapering fingers and rather small feet; size 9-10 for the men and 3-5 for the women. The average height of the men was about five-feet ten inches; the women were about five feet five inches. His bone structure was medium, therefore, his weight was about one-hundred-fifth pounds; with the women proportionately less about one hundred ten pounds.

The general appearance of the early Seneca was stalwart, rugged and brimming with vigor and vitality.

"Think and talk about feeling GOOD and we will FEEL GOOD," was the belief of the early Senecas. Another adage of the early Seneca was:

WE ARE WHAT WE EAT...WE ARE WHAT WE THINK
WE SEEK TO "WALK IN BALANCE" WITH MOTHER EARTH
TO GROW IN PEACE AND HARMONY.

The early Senecas did not readily show their age. This was due to the thoughts and acts of caring for their physical needs. Cleanliness was an essential part of their lives. Every member of each family took daily baths in the summer. During the cold times, they took steam baths (sweatlodge), after which wintergreen, sassafras, or sunflower seed oil was generously rubbed over the entire body. The oils smelled pleasant and at the same time kept the skin and the hair in a healthy condition.

Regardless of age, every Seneca exercised daily. Keeping the bodies physically fit was a necessity in those days; their very lives depended upon it. The Elders exercised to maintain supple and firm bodies while the younger Senecas enjoyed the fun and good feelings connected with being healthy. "To look and feel healthy brought about happiness."

Control of diet was another habit for maintaining physical fitness. Food was measured by what each one believed he could hold in his cupped hands. This offered a true amount of food for each individual who ate when hungry in the mid-morning and late afternoon. In between, the Senecas drank refreshing spring water, vegetable juices and teas steeped from roots, leaves and bark. Fresh fruit was also eaten between the other meals. Sweets were not eaten in excess, since the fruit and berries satisfied the desire for sweets. This practice resulted in generally good teeth. However, if a tooth became troublesome, it was simply wiggled loose and pulled out.

Foot massage was a usual way to seek good health. Early Senecas believed that healthy feet meant a healthy body. Each person created his favorite method.

Running and resting was another practice that kept the early Seneca feeling happy. Regular distances were plotted with rest areas designated to carry on this particular exercise. Many young people became great runners as a result of this custom.

Now, we can understand why the early Senecas believed that good health was so important. Everyone had to make an honest effort to be responsible for personal physical fitness. This practice helped to develop self-respect. "When we respect the needs of our physical bodies, we are a credit to our intelligence," they said.

THINGS TO DO:

1. Let us compare the general appearance of the early Seneca with the people of today. Consider the height; weight.

   a. Would they be considered light, medium or small?
   b. What is meant by agile? Can you think of anyone who is agile?
   c. Explain how a healthy person looks? What does he think?
   d. Compare the personality of a healthy person with one who is sickly.
   e. What does a sickly person do that causes us to stay away from him?
   f. What does it mean to live in balance with Nature?
   g. Why do you think the early Seneca ate only twice a day?
   h. Do you think the Senecas were happier years ago than they are today? What reasons can you give for your answers?

2. Now, it's time to practice foot massage. Take your shoes off but leave your socks on. Turn your foot up so that the bottom faces you. Grasp it with your fingers on the top and your thumb on the bottom. With your thumb, press down along the bottom of your foot just below the toes. If there is a tender spot, massage the spot with a circular motion. Soon, the tenderness disappears.

SENECA FOOD

For many generations the early Senecas obtained their food by moving from place to place. During this time they ate all kinds of roots, nuts, bark, fruit, game and wild vegatables provided by Mother Earth. Later on, when they moved into areas that offered a greater variety of food, they began to build villages.

Early each morning, hunters would leave the villages to search for food. They carried buffalo or moose hide pouches slung over their shoulders. These pouches were round in shape and laced through holes punched around the outer rim. When drawn up or closed, it formed a bag (pouch). When opened, the pouch laid flat on the ground.

As the hunters came within hearing distance of the village, after the hunt, they gave a "whoop" to signal that they were coming. The villagers greeted them with excitement and curiosity, for sometimes they found items the villagers had never seen before.

Experimenting in ways to use these strange things created fun for everyone. Sometimes the experiments were successful. Other times they caused sickness or even death. Learning by trial and error helped the people find what was good for them and what was harmful.

It was not unusual to hold contests while experimenting on unfamiliar articles. This custom encouraged the Senecas to use their creative abilities. The test included using the new materials for weaving, making ropes, for decorations and even for playing games.

Since we now know that the Senecas believed that everything had a purpose in Nature's plan, the contests were based on finding ways to use every part of the article. There was to be no waste. Whenever a discovery was made, rejoicing filled the villages. Feasts of thanksgiving were held and neighboring villages were invited to attend. These celebrations made life interesting for the early Senecas.

The Miracle of The Seeds

It happened one day that the hunters had returned with an unfamiliar plant. The villagers pressed close to see what it looked like. Because it resembled the Sun, they called it the Sunflower. The parts were spread on the ground where experiments were made to find ways to use them. They were boiled-dried-pounded-mixed together-woven and eaten. In this way, the Sunflower had been proven worthy of great use.

As the seeds were good to eat, four young girls put some in their pouches when they left to pick berries. When it came time to eat the seeds, one of the girls had lost her pouch. They searched in vain. Disappointed, they finally returned to the village and reported the loss to their friends.

"Look! There's the pouch you lost last year."

The following year, the same girls went berry picking. To their surprise they saw four stately Sunflowers growing where they had picked berries. While they stood a "Voice" whispered into their minds:

"The Miracle of Seeds, The Secret of Life
Nurtured by Earth, Grows Plants Alike! The Great Spirit Has Spoken!"

Thrilled with what they heard, the maidens hurriedly returned to their village. "The beautiful sunflower has grown from the seed in the lost pouch," they announced with enthusiasm.

From this great discovery, the "Secret of the Seeds" had been revealed. It is said that this introduced farming into the lives of the people.

EARLY SENECA FARMING

Women and children carried on the farming that provided adequate, health-giving, flavorful food for everyone. Enough food had to be produced to sustain all the villagers throughout the year.

In the spring, seeds were planted in the cleared woodlands after the frost was out of the ground. Sometimes the woods were burned to clear land. Other times an act of Nature cleared it for them, such as wind storms and forest fires.

The three major crops planted every year were corn, beans and squash. They were called the "Three Sisters" which were the staples of the Seneca diet.

Mother Earth provided soft, rich soil from decayed leaves, rotting stumps and fruit from the trees. This material made the ground easy to work. Also, it was porous and held the moisture when it rained. It was not possible, at first, to plant the seeds in rows as we do today. Women cleared small spaces by scooping out the soil in a circle and planting the seeds around the outside rim. This method made it easy to identify when the plants began to grow and when they weeded between the plants, they put the weeds in the center. This helped keep the roots of the plants from drying out. As more land was cleared, the people began to plant their seeds in rows.

Experiments proved that planting at intervals assured a continuous crop throughout the growing season. Interval planting gave the Senecas an opportunity to dry their produce as it matured. Drying racks were made for this purpose. They were merely lengths of poles supported on forked branches that stood about six to eight feet above the ground. Fruit, berries and vegetables were dried in this manner. Children had the work of turning these so that they would dry evenly. When it rained, they would hurriedly gather up the drying material. Only the sun and warm, dry weather hastened the drying procedure.

Maple trees were tapped to collect the sap for making maple sugar and syrup. Gathering leaves, bark roots and twigs from various trees, such as hemlock, pine and sassafras was the responsibility of the women and children.

Preparation and Storage of Seneca Indian Food:

Located near the gardens were cookhouses. Women were always preparing food. No one knew when the hunters would return and they were a hungry group. The Senecas enjoyed eating soup. Scorched corn, dry beans and sunflower seed mixed with seasonal vegetables and any meat, fowl or fish that was available were the popular ingredients. A favorite soup was made from corn, red kidney beans, wild potato and meat. In keeping with the balance of Nature, note the combination of four ingredients; one that grew below the ground and three that grew above. The symbolism of "four" seemed to be a complete balance. Whenever a combination met this symbolism, it tasted better.

Stone boiling was commonly used by the women to prepare their vegetables. The containers were made from wood, bark, hide or baskets filled with water. Stones were heated over a fire and dropped into the containers. Reed baskets and seives were made from black ash trees. Splints from this tree were more pliable than from other trees and when wet would swell and hold water. Some women were capable of weaving reed bowls and splint baskets so tightly that even when dry they would hold water. The women saved the broth when the vegetables were cooked. Vegetables were not boiled to a mush but were crispy.

Huge quantities of food could be prepared in earth ovens. A hole was dug into the ground usually about two to three feet deep and about four feet wide. These pits were lined with stone, twigs and leaves to form a foundation for the food which was spread in layers. Stones were heated in the fire pits and laid in the bottom of the earth oven. Food to be baked was wrapped in leaves, bark or hide to keep it clean and laid upon the stones. More heated stones were laid upon the food. Reed and grass were layered between more stones and food. When large numbers of people were expected, such as for ceremonial feasts, many of these earth ovens were put into operation. Large chunks of meat, fish and fowl were put into these earth ovens. Today, clambakes are an off-shoot of these early earth ovens.

Meat and fish were speared onto soaked tree branches and roasted over hot ashes. Sometimes the hunters hung their food-laden sticks, like spits, between two forked branches that straddled the hot coals.

Meat and fish were often placed in smoke houses to be cured. They looked like bark cones with a hole at the top. Hickory logs smoldered beneath the meat and fish that hung at the top of the smoke-house. Hickory logs gave the meat and fish a pleasant taste. This food could be kept longer than fresh food. Maple logs were also used to smoke cure meat and fish.

A mortar for pounding seed into flour was made from a burned out tree stump. Two people, each holding a wooden pestle, alternately pounded the seeds. Many varieties of seed were used to make flour: corn, sunflower, bean, pumpkin, to name a few. The flour was used to bake bread and to make puddings.

Knives and other cutting tools were fashioned from flintstone. Its hardness permitted it to be chipped to a sharp edge that lasted longer without breaking than other stones. Some bones from larger animals were used to clean hard-to-reach places. Rough stones were used for scraping. Most of the skins were left on the vegetables and removed after they were cooked. Squash were baked whole. It is not necessary to remove the skin from vegetables.

Spoons were carved from wood to ladle out the food. Large wooden bowls served for stacking boiled ears of corn. Loosely woven baskets were used to stack "Wheels" of boiled corn bread. Cornhusk mats were woven to hold warm food, served in hot baskets.

Preparing food was an art among the early Senecas. Anyone who ever visited a village in those days was presented with the best food available. Seneca Indian hospitality knew no bounds.

Food was prepared and stored so that it could feed the Senecas during the long, cold winters. Dried food was stored in pits lined with stone and wrapped in hide and bark. Baskets were tightly woven to hold dried corn. Hollowed logs with fitted covers were filled with dried fruit, nuts and vegetables. Sassafras leaves and bark were sprinkled around these storage containers to keep insects from eating the food. Strong-smelling herbs and plants, such as marigold and wild onion, also repelled insects.

Food that was caught in the winter was cut up and allowed to freeze and hung in outside storage houses. Frozen food was eaten first.

Walk-in storage pits were dug into the side of a hill. These pits were dug deep enough into the hill so that the frost seemed not to reach them. The sides and the roof were shored up with logs to keep the pit from caving in. Squash and root vegetables were stored in these walk-in pits. Also some fruit such as apples and a variety of nuts were stored in these hillside storage pits. Sometimes natural caves were found that served this purpose.

All herbs were gathered and tied in bunches and hung upside down in the shade. Flowers and small seeds were stored in dried gourds and hung up in the upper part of the longhouses. Corn, still on the cob, was braided by the husks and hung in the longhouse under the roof rafters. Cakes of maple sugar were strung on peeled willow whips, tied into circles. Dried fruit such as apples and wild cherries could also be strung on these whips. We might call these "wheels of Seneca snacks."

It is easy to see that the early Seneca studied his environment and used the gifts of Mother Earth to help survive the winters. Nature provided the food. The Senecas learned how to use it and Nature helped store it.

The staffs of life were "The Three Sisters," Corn, Beans and Squash. We have learned how the Senecas prepared their food and how they stored it. We now understand that their environment offered a great variety of things to eat. All kinds of animals provided the meat. The streams were full of

fish. The Senecas enjoyed their orchards of fruit. Seeds of countless varieties were used to make flour. The trees offered the nuts; the bushes gave berries. Herbs and roots were used for medicines. The Senecas were grateful for all these gifts and, in appreciation, held seasonal ceremonial feasts of thanksgiving.

THINGS TO DO:

1. Let's make believe that we are preparing a "Feast of Thanksgiving." Think of all the food that can be found in our area that would make a delicious meal. We can make a game of it. Divide the class into six groups. One group will be the fish group. The others are the vegetables, nuts, fruits, berries and meat groups. One at a time, each team names a food found only in their group. The team that can name the most items of food wins.

2. Make a Seneca Indian Snack Wheel. Have someone bring several willow whips. They must be thin, not more than an eighth of an inch. Have some apples and sweet cherries ready. Peel the apples and cut them into wedges and thread them on the peeled willow whips which must be wet to be pliable. Take the pits out of the cherries and thread them on the same willow whips. Hang the wheels in the sun until the fruit has shriveled and dried. The wheels should be small, about as big as the circle made by holding your thumbs and pointing fingers together.

3. Build a drying rack. This is how:

   a. Collect some twigs that are straight and have forked ends.
   b. Measure them so that they will be the same height.
   c. Collect enough twigs to lay them across the forked twigs. Usually, we will need four forked twigs to support the cross pieces. Only have the forked twigs (one) at each corner.
   d. The cross pieces are placed close together to hold the material that is drying. Tie the cross pieces with thread. They can't slip then.

4. Have your mother bake acorn squash, whole. It is a delight to eat after the seeds are removed and the center is dotted with honey.

SENECA CLOTHING

The early Seneca used any material that he could find in his surroundings to make clothes. Leather was the most popular. However, reeds, grasses, wood fibers and plants were also used for this purpose.

Under garments known as loin cloths were woven strips of material measuring about twelve inches wide. When worn, the loin cloth reached from the back at the waist, passed between the legs to the waist in front. It was secured at each side by ties. Sleeveless vests completed the type of underclothing worn by men and boys. When it was warm, they did not wear the vests.

The breechclout, worn by men and boys, was a piece of leather measuring about twelve inches square in front and a trifle longer in the back. Inch long slits were cut at the waist through which a leather belt was laced to hold the breechclout in place. During the winter, men and boys wore long breeches to keep their legs warm. These were laced up the sides with leather thongs. In winter, fur skins were worn.

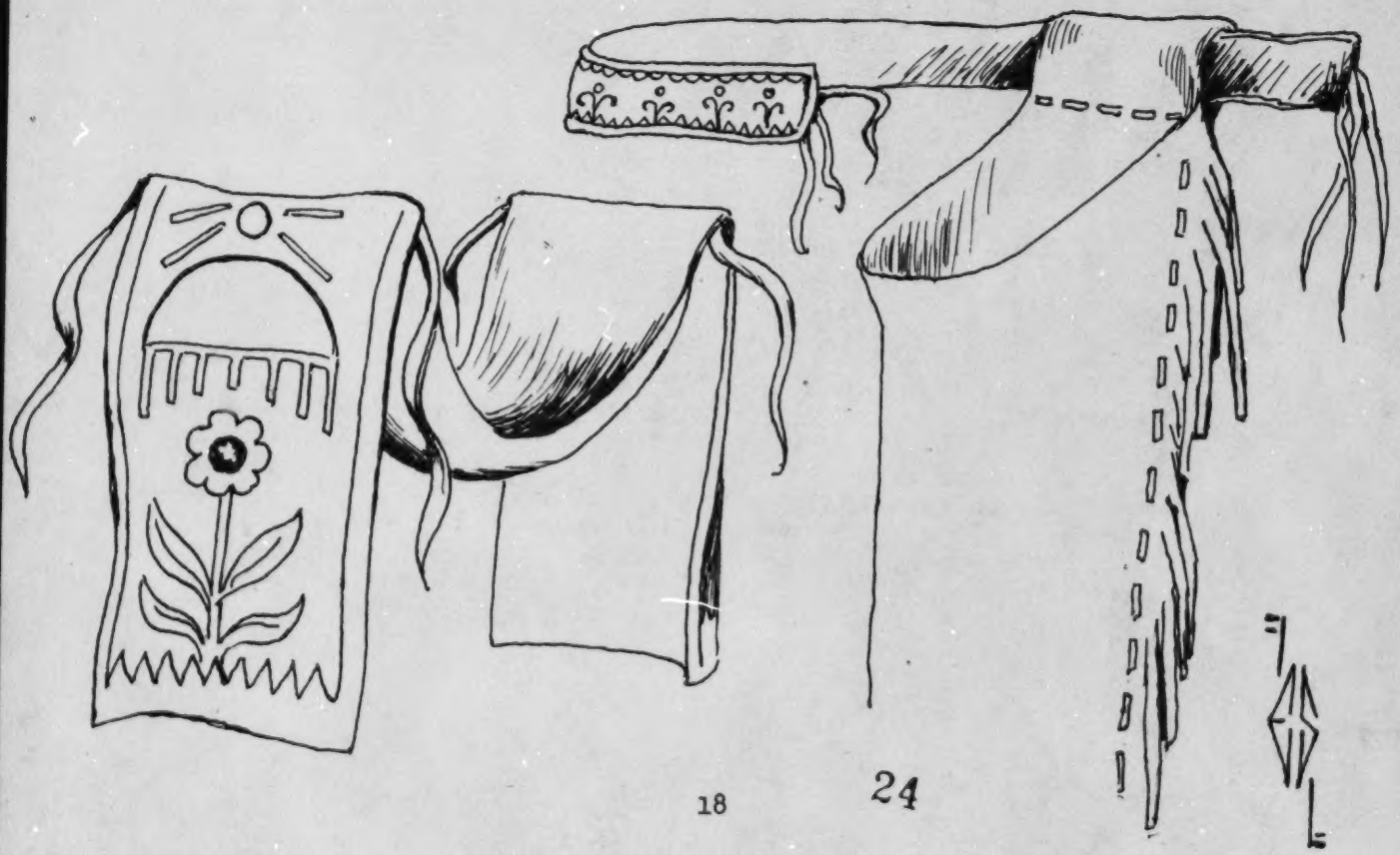
Leather jackets were made from two deer hides, one for the front and the other for the back. These were sewn by leather lacing. The sides, bottom and armholes were slashed into narrow strips to help water drip off when it rained. Sleeves were set in at the armholes and sewn with bone needles, then threaded with leather lacing. Various lacing designs were used to make the seams decorative. Often the jackets were reversible and some were vegetable dyed.

Leather moccasins were adorned with floral designs. Summer moccasins were made from braided cornhusks. These were quite durable, lightweight, washable and cool.

Women's clothing was similar to the men's. Women wore leggings that reached below the knee to the ankle. They wore either a wrap-around skirt or a skirt that had a twelve-inch slit in front. The slit permitted ease in walking. Women's jackets were made like the men's. Sometimes women wore tunics, others wore capes.

Senecas wore headbands to keep their hair in place. Headbands were worn parallel to the eyebrows. Later in their culture, feathers were added as decoration.

When boys became scouts, they wore bonnets called gus-to-wehs. The crown of the gus-to-weh looked like a skullcap with a feather that twirled at the top. This feather fitted on a whittled stick that stuck out from the crown of the gus-to-weh. It twirled as the wearer brushed against low hanging branches. Feather fluffs covered the rest of the crown. A headband attached at the bottom of the gus-to-weh was decorated with beads, embroidered with moose hair, or porcupine quills. This decoration was dyed in many cases. Vegetable and berry coloring were used for dying.



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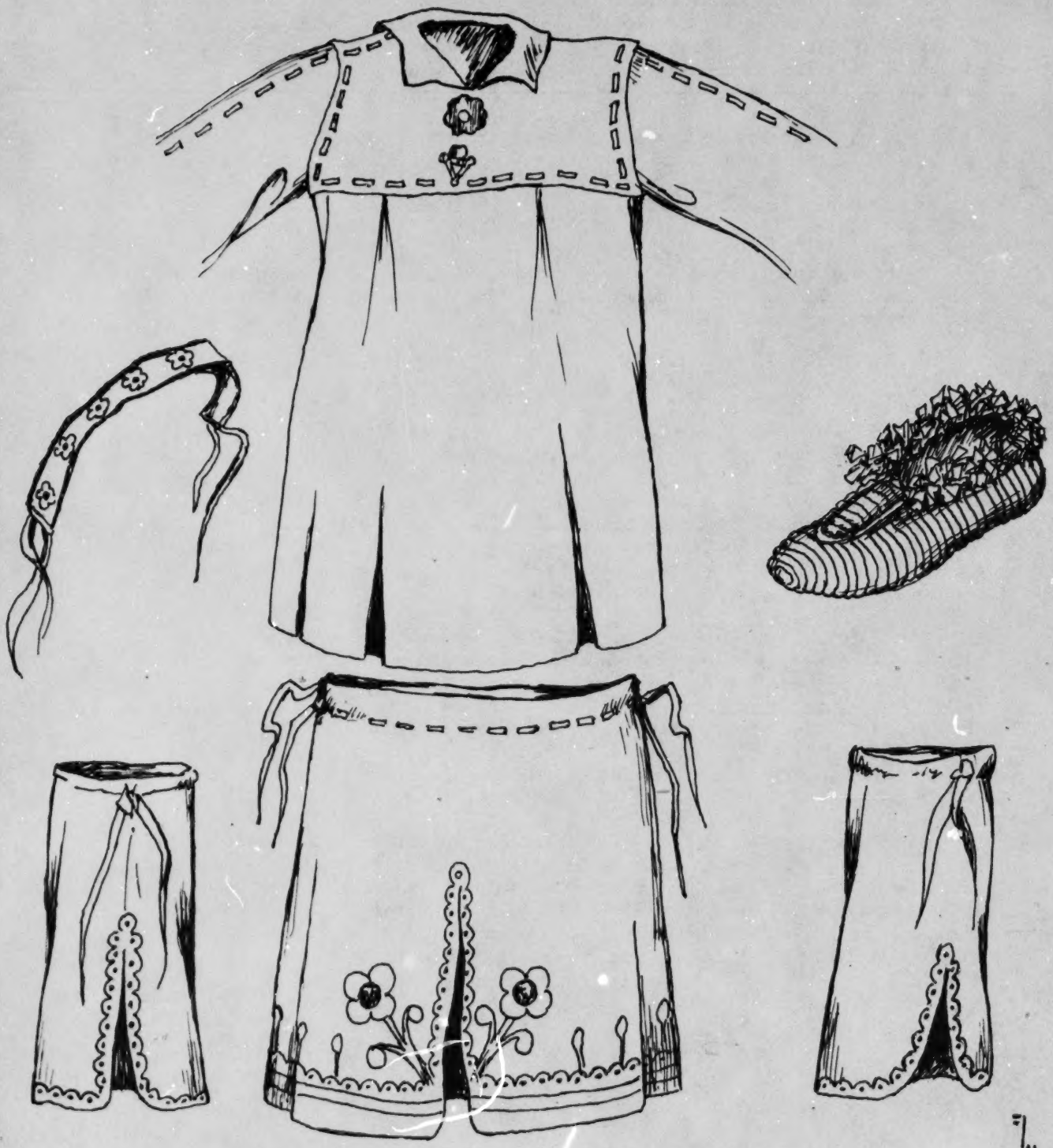


Stems and reeds that had been cut in different lengths and dyed served as beads. Sunbaked clay, fashioned into unusual shapes, were also used to decorate clothing. It is interesting to note that both men and women made clothes. This included weaving, dying and decorating. To this day, the practice of making Seneca clothing is done by both men and women.

Senecas possessed an incredible creative ability when finding material to decorate their clothing. Animal teeth, claws, bird tail feathers, claws and beaks, dried fruit, shells and stones were some of the items used in making each garment beautiful. Combinations offered a wealth of design in color and texture.

Nakedness was frowned upon by the early Senecas. For one thing, the climate was too cold to be undressed. Modesty was an important characteristic among these people.

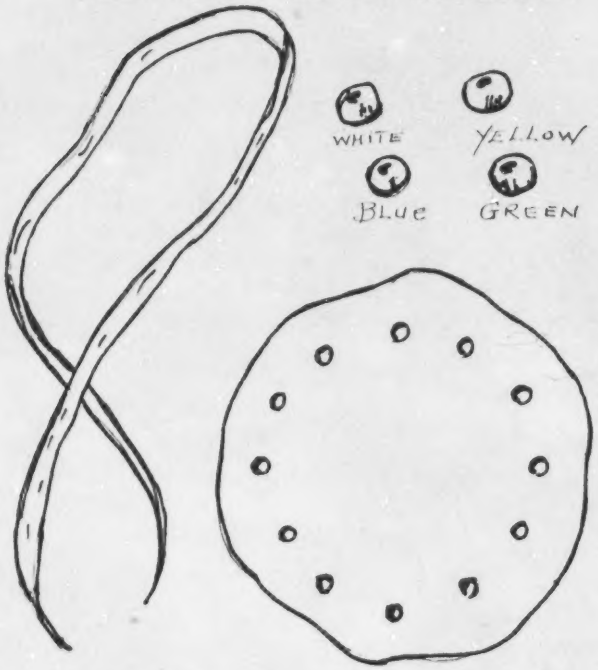
Weaving

Senecas were excellent weavers. They used all kinds of fibers to make their clothing and baskets. The method most commonly used was called finger weaving. Net weaving, loop weaving, twining, plaiting (braiding) knitting and crocheting (terms used today) were all types of finger weaving. Spinning was done on a spindle or by hand. Some loom weaving was done. Leggings were finger knotted and used to keep the feet, arms and legs warm during the bitter cold winters. Warm, waterproof blankets were made by interweaving soft cedar bark fibers with rabbit fur.

The materials used were from wild plants, sweet grass, Indian hemp, milkweed, and the inner bark of cedar and basswood trees. It took great patience to prepare the material into fibers. Tines (prongs) made from twigs bound together at one end helped to separate the fibers. Whipping the fibers fluffed them so that they could be flattened out enough to place on a spindle. As the spindle was twisted between the fingers, or rolled along the leg, a continuous strand could be pulled from the loose fibers. Wood was pounded into splinters then separated into threads.

Floors of the longhouses were often covered with cornhusk mats that had been braided and sewn together into rounded pads. Almost any material could be braided and sewn together to make large or small pieces depending upon the purpose. Three strand braiding was the simplest method but many strands made an interesting effect when sewn together. Senecas loved color. Weaving gave them a chance to use their creative ability.

STONE POUCH



THINGS TO DO:

1. Collect some stones to compare the shape and color with your friends.
2. Find a stone you especially like and hold it tightly in your left hand with the right hand over it as if you were shaking hands with yourself. Think of the stone resting in the palm of your left hand. Soon you will feel your pulse beating. Keep holding on to the stone until it feels part of you. Open your hand. Does the stone feel warm? Can you explain why? Let's think about this.
3. Make a stone pouch. This is how:

Take a piece of leather or felt and draw a circle with a three-inch diameter. Cut the circle out. Fold it in half. With a pencil mark off six dots along the outer rim about one-half inch from the edge of the half circle. Punch holes on the six marks. You will have twelve holes in the circle when it is opened. Using a shoe lace, lace around the circle going into every hole. Move in and out. Draw the lace tight.

Now, you have a place to keep your favorite stones. Look at the sample picture. The beads have a special meaning. Yellow means the sun; white, the moon; blue, the water; green, the earth. The yellow and white beads are strung on one side of the lace and the blue and green on the other. Among the early Senecas, it was important to have at least four beads as decoration. Remember that the number four was a balanced number.

THINGS TO DO

1. Make headbands with scraps of material and decorate them with old jewelry.
2. Make bracelets in the same way. Most of all, create something different. This is good practice to develop creative talents.
3. Make a Seneca Gus-to-weh

   a. Find an old felt hat
   b. Rip off the brim just below the headband
   c. At the top of the crown, attach a small wooden spool (thread spool),
   d. Place a feather in the hole. Or use a golf tee: Poke a hole through the felt at the crown and push the pointed end through. Set the bottom of the feather on the shaft. See how it spins!
   e. Cover the entire crown of the bonnet with a colorful feather fluff.

SENECA VILLAGE

The Seneca village was a well designed living community built for service and comfort. The village had a family atmosphere in which each person felt the importance of sharing responsibilities so that everyone could live a happy existence. The village consisted of the longhouses, a variety of storage houses, the smokehouse, the drying house, the carving house, craft houses, the council house, the medicine lodge and the turtle mound.

The longhouse was the family dwelling where the families lived and slept. The longhouses rimmed the outer ring of the village. Other buildings, with the exception of the council house, stood close to the longhouses. The council house was located the greatest distance from the village and had ample space around it. The turtle mound provided the place to hold dances and ceremonials.

The cook house, the drying house and the smoke house contained fire-pits designed for each particular purpose. Storage houses were filled with hides and pelts; wood for making bows and arrows; splints for making baskets; beads and other ornaments for decorating clothing; stones for making tools and weapons, and a place to dry herbs. In some of the storage houses, pits were dug and lined with stones, bark and hides. Large baskets were placed in these pits to hold items not needed on a daily basis such as ceremonial items (e.g., rattles and masks). Projects that depended upon storage were conducted in that area for convenience.

The medicine lodge was in the center of the village so that it was within easy reach when anyone was sick. The medicine people held an important position for the welfare of the villagers.

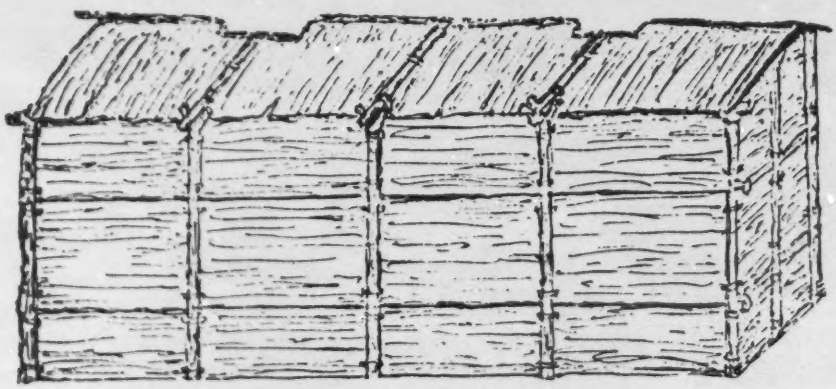
A simple sanitary system was practiced in the early Seneca Indian villages. All refuse was placed in an open pit and immediately covered over with earth. Located near each longhouse was a bark covered outhouse used as a lavatory. A hewn out log placed over an open pit served as a seat. The pit was gradually filled in with earth as it was used. The outhouse could easily be moved to another site after the pit was filled in.

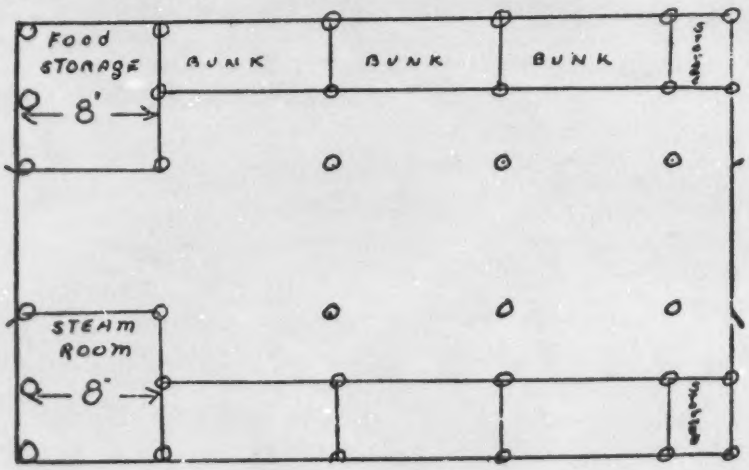
The physical arrangement of these villages proved satisfactory in answering the daily needs of its inhabitants.

THE LONGHOUSE

The early Seneca longhouse was warm, durable and provided ample space for sleeping, some storage and social activities. The approximate size was 20' x 40' x 15'. Senecas located their longhouses where four good sized trees could act as corner supports. This assured substantial corner support to build around. Bark would be stripped from nearby trees. Only one strip was taken from each tree. This prevented the tree from dying. Trees were never slashed all around because this would cut off the flow of life-giving nourishment and would kill it. Bark strips measured about 12 inches to 18 inches wide and were about 6 feet long. The bark strips were laid flat on the ground between four trees with heavy logs on top to hold them flat. This prevented the bark from curling as it dried. Sometimes the bark was laid in a stream to keep it soaked until ready for use.

To form the upright supports for the sides of the longhouse, young trees about 4" in diameter, and some measuring 3," were cut and staggered in a trench to the depth of 18"; one four foot-pole and one three-foot pole, three feet apart. The poles extended above the ground about 12 feet. These were the supports for the siding.





Tree saplings were used as the roof rafters. They were bent and lashed to the side supports with animal sinew or strong pliable vines such as grape or willow. The trench was filled to the ground level with stones and clay in which the first row of bark was set. The first row of bark was applied to the sides just below the ground level to help keep water from seeping in and small animals from entering. This also helped to keep drafts out. Above and overlapping the first row of bark another row was attached to the supporting poles. Bark was wedged between staggered poles. Each slab of bark was securely tied to the poles and underlying bark. This procedure continued until the longhouse was completely covered except for the draft openings in the roof.

Two rows of 15 foot poles, forked at the top and placed five feet apart supported the roof from inside. A long pole extended over the entrance at the ends of the longhouse at the roof line. Under the poles removable doors were hung to make it easy to haul storage into the roof area such as winter clothing, braided corn and fur blankets.

Many of the longhouses were lined with bark and sweet grass to add insulation. Sometimes hides were hung in between the layers of bark to help keep the heat in and the dampness out. After the insulation was completed and the walls were closed tightly, the sleeping quarters were added.

Along the inside wall, five two-tiered bunks were built. They were divided into 6-foot lengths, whether being occupied by a child or an adult. Bunks were not customarily shared by another member of the family. The two lower rows of bunks were for sleeping. Above them smaller bunks or shelves were built for personal storage. The bunks normally measured four feet in width on the first row; two feet from the floor with four feet of headroom. Wood for the fire could be stored in the floor space under the bunks.

In some of the longhouses, the remaining space at the end was used for an inside sweat area (steam bath). A shallow pit lined with stones was dug into the ground. Peeled logs placed around the two sides and back served as seats for the people to sit on. After the stones were heated, water was poured over the hot stones causing steam to rise in the area. Other dome-shaped sweat lodges were built outside the longhouses.

Across from the sweat bath, Senecas kept their eating utensils and stored food that was used on a daily basis. Eating bowls and baskets hung on the walls.

As families increased in number, additions were built on the longhouses. For this reason, in planning a village, the ends of the longhouses faced East and West around an imaginary circle. This arrangement provided allowance for expansion. The life of an early Seneca Indian village was about twelve years. By this time, the longhouses began to decay and were allowed to return to Mother-Earth. Senecas just abandoned the village and moved four or five miles away from the site to build another one.

LIFE AND COMFORT IN THE LONGHOUSE

Life in the longhouse had its trials and problems, just as in the homes of today. The importance of sharing the good with the bad conditions was accepted as part of the responsibility of each member of the family.

Everyone had his own space for storage of personal property. Each one respected the property of others. Senecas learned at an early age the duty of doing their part in making the longhouse a pleasant place to live. In reality, each bunk might be considered as a room. Personal comfort depended upon personal wishes. Matresses and pillows were made of soft deer hides sewn together and stuffed with dried cornhusks, goose feathers or pine needles. Blankets were made out of hides and material woven from fibers found in the area or just traded with other people. Bunks were partitioned on three sides for privacy with animal skins or woven splints. Deer hides were often attached from the upper bunk and could be dropped over the side to cover the opening.

Privacy prevailed in the early Seneca longhouse. Men and boys took their sweat baths first since they were required to set out early to hunt and fish. The women took their baths next. The older people and the babies were last. The older people took care of the infants while the young mothers worked.

Meals were prepared, for the most part, in the cook houses, and were eaten when people became hungry. Generally, the food was brought to the longhouses to be eaten before darkness set in.

Space between the bunks, down through the center of the longhouse, was used for family activities. Furniture was simple. Split logs that stood on legs the right height for each individual served as seats. Cornhusk mats covered the floor.

The longhouse was neat and uncluttered since there was a place for everything. Space was limited so the Senecas did not acquire the habit of saving things. Life was simple and times were often hard; every day was one of survival where each person felt a certain responsibility for making a definite contribution. Village society depended upon each one sharing his talents and abilities.

Fires were a constant hazard. If one longhouse caught fire, many times the entire village burned. Whole families were often trapped in the rapidly burning buildings. When fires were kindled, smoke sometimes became trapped to cause violent coughing, choking, and tears. Hours after, eyes were red and smarted. The draft conditions were responsible for this problem. Fire tending was a constant occupation carried on by a dependable resident of the longhouse. When fires were not allowed to die, the clouds of smoke were better controlled. During the warm weather, there was no need to have the central fire burning.

Insects and small animals searching for living quarters, found the spaces between the bark good places to stay. Bees and ants were a constant nuisance in the summer.

Longhouses were constantly being repaired because the rain seemed to find ways to drip between the uneven bark siding. Rough wood slivered easily and children were removing slivers almost daily. However, the comforts far outweighed the discomforts.

Longhouses were cool in the summer and cozy and warm in the winter. The smell of wood burning and the aroma of pine and herbal oils suggested a feeling of peace and contentment. Voices were just above a whisper. The atmosphere of these early Seneca living quarters can still be captured today in cabins when the sound of raindrops on the roof and the songs of the night creatures fill the air.

THINGS TO DO:

1. Follow the picture plan to make a miniature Seneca Indian Village. Have each one in the class select what he would like to do. Feel confident in using your talents and abilities. Your project will bring enjoyment.

THE DAILY LIFE OF A YOUNG SENECA

Daily life of the young Seneca was divided into work, adventure, fun and learning experiences. Life in the villages revolved around the families. Parents, grandparents, relatives and children shared the necessary duties of each day. This sharing extended into the surroundings to include the plant life and the animal life.

Children were encouraged to have pets, such as crows, rabbits, racoons, opposums and skunks. While caring for them, they learned about animal characteristics, living and eating habits, and how to treat them with kindness. Children made friends with their pets but did not take them away from their natural living places. While in the woodlands, they would sit quietly and make the same sounds the animals made. After a while, the animals would come close to them. Before long, the woodland creatures would be sitting on the children's shoulders or sharing nuts and fruit found on the trees. Soon, the pets would follow them into the village.

If a pet became injured, the children would do everything to make it comfortable. Should it be necessary to kill a pet, it was done instantly to prevent suffering. The children learned this from watching the forest creatures kill for food. The victim seemed never to suffer before it was eaten.

The early Senecas did not hunt for sport. They believed that animals unable to escape their deadly arrows were the weak ones. This allowed the stronger ones to raise healthier families. All hunting and fishing was done with this principle in mind. Senecas hunted and fished for just enough food to satisfy their needs. Unnecessary killing and waste was unthinkable in those days.

It was an exciting event to go with the hunters in search for food. Girls were trained to hunt since they were required to know how in case of an emergency. Each one was prepared to do his part for the safety of the village.

Learning about the plant world was equally important. Visiting the glens, valleys and forests to gather berries, fruit, wild vegetables, herbs and learning how to use them became an enjoyable adventure shared by whole families. Sharing the good with the hard times gave each person an opportunity to put forth every effort, since living in the village meant sharing benefits equally. When the hunting was good, everyone ate well. When it was slim to poor, everyone accepted the lack of food. This existence built respect and responsibility and made every Seneca feel useful to his family, friends, relatives and to himself. Faith in oneself and in others was a good feeling to develop. This was the first characteristic that needed serious thought and concern.

Acceptance of work came next in the lives of the young Senecas. Everyone had a job to perform. The simplest jobs were learned first. Growing up meant doing things that required caring for others. The smallest children carried messages from one longhouse to another or "saved steps" for the older people by getting the things they needed. Respect for the needs of others helped develop self-respect. Without self-respect one couldn't grow.

Adventure came third. All kinds of experiences fell into this category. Lessons learned from pets, elders, friends and relatives added happiness to the life of the young Senecas, especially, if they looked upon these lessons as adventures.

Games and other recreation were the reward for work well done. Games provided a means of training runners, hunters, gardeners and craftmen and were most important for physical fitness. Growth among the young Senecas was seen in the responsibilities they carried. Each child in the village satisfied a specific need. He was respected for the way he carried it out. In one sense, it became his badge of recognition and built the foundation on which to develop self-confidence.

Evenings were devoted to community activities, such as singing, dancing, listening to the ancient wisdom taught by the teachers or visiting with friends and relatives. Ceremonial feats brought special enjoyment to the young Senecas because the children from other villages came. Athletic events usually accompanied the ceremonies. These activities often lasted several days.

Life for the Senecas was full of things to do. It helped the young people grow into fine, trustworthy adults.

THINGS TO DO:

1. Make up a play on what you have learned about Seneca life showing a day in the life of a young Seneca.

   During the feasts, time was sent aside for the children. One evening of each activity, children from different villages put on their own entertainment. These events were very popular because the talents and abilities of the young Senecas were expressed. Presentation of legends played by the children drew the largest gathering. Seneca adults were just as proud of their children during these performances as all parents are today.

2. See Appendix for an example of a play that Seneca children put on for their parents.

MEANING OF STONES AND PEBBLES TO THE SENECAS

Stones and pebbles had a great meaning to the early Senecas. They played a dramatic and essential part in their lives. Stones and pebbles could be found wherever the Senecas walked. Because they were unlimited in number, the Senecas began to find uses for them.

The most popular use for stones was for tools and weapons. Rough stones were used as grinders to shape, scrape and smooth other stones into tools and knives. Hard-pointed stones were used for drilling, cutting and chipping. Favorite stones that were used as tools would be drilled with holes so that they could be easily carried. A leather thong was threaded through the hole permitting the Seneca to hang the thong over his shoulder.

Many interesting customs developed as a result of using stones. One custom revolved around the Home Stone. When a longhouse was completed, members of the family would hunt for the Home Stone. After one had been selected, a dedication ceremony followed that symbolized love, peace and responsibility that held the family together. During the ceremony, the Home Stone was placed near the center of the longhouse and was never moved from that site. Friends and relatives were invited to the feast that followed the Home-Stone Ceremony.

Another custom that has almost been lost concerns the family stones and their meaning. Families living in one longhouse would collect stones that resembled the Home-Stone; one for each member. These were called the Family Stones and were laid according to each member's birthday just below the ground level around the central fire bed. Sometimes they were laid to represent the clan.

When families left for a hunting trip, as Senecas frequently did, the stones were buried in a special pattern. Sometimes while the families were away, visitors would use their longhouse. If the visitors were acquainted with the original owners, messages could be revealed by reading the arrangement of the stones. Visitors would leave "thank you" stones for the use of the longhouse. Others were not familiar with this custom. When stones were found near a Seneca village, they may have thought they were part of the fire bed or a burial ground. Perhaps one day such an arrangement of stones will be found and a message can be uncovered.

There were other interesting customs connected with the use of stones. Stones were also used for adornment, for cooking and as eating utensils, for building materials, for weights, for medicinal purposes, for steam baths and for games. In fact, the uses for collecting stones were as varied as were the stones themselves.

SENECA TEACHERS

Seneca children had many teachers, each one contributing an important part in molding their lives. Seneca teaching depended upon the examples the parents set for their children. Mothers were the first teachers. Their duty was to teach the principle of sharing, being helpful to others, taking care of personal property, self-care and having respect for the Elders.

Seneca fathers shared the responsibility of teaching their children self-survival. They taught how to travel without becoming lost, tracking down animals, learning about edible food, herbs and emergency care. Fathers also taught the young people how to hunt, fish and play games honorably and fairly. They were responsible for teaching physical fitness. Both parents taught the importance of respecting Mother Earth and all her creatures and plants.

Discipline began at home. It was the basic rule that governed the "Seneca Way of Life." Every parent followed the example set by Mother Earth. Through Mother Earth, the early teachers saw discipline at work in the plant, bird, animal and fish world. Parents of these creatures also taught by example. Therefore, Seneca teachers did the same.

Medicine people were the next teachers. They "wore many faces" (played many roles) including care of the sick and aging, teaching about food and herbs, guarding the customs and traditions of their people, and over-seeing everyone's general welfare. It was their responsibility to pass their knowledge on to those who wished to follow in their footsteps. Medicine people were both men and women.

The Clan Mothers were also teachers. It was their duty to explain the noble characteristics the Senecas were expected to develop and set moral standards. Clan Mothers faced all changes with grace and wisdom. Every girl looked to the day she would become a Clan Mother.

The Elders added their wisdom by telling the children of their experiences. They were to supply the spiritual teaching that could lead to peace, contentment and happiness, and the fulfillment of every dream.

Storytellers were also teachers. They visited the villages to dramatize legends. They brought singing, dancing and other entertainment for the social enjoyment of the Senecas. Many lessons were learned from them. It was a joy to see them perform with pets. Senecas also gave credit to their pets because they were such good teachers.

In the eyes of the young Senecas, the knowledge of their teachers went without question. At the same time, students felt free to ask questions so that they could better understand their lessons. Sometimes, if the lessons were difficult, the teacher would refer to another one that held more interest. Then, when they went back to the hard lesson, everyone seemed better prepared to grasp it. Legends that made the students laugh made learning more enjoyable. Seneca teachers were grateful they could make learning such fun. Teachers were happy people and enjoyed what they taught. As a result, this made the young Senecas find pleasure in what they learned. Being among teachers who made their work interesting created a friendly atmosphere in which to grow.

THINGS TO DO:

1. Do you think that parents teach by example today? Give one reason for your example.
2. Give an example of a storyteller and tell the lesson he taught.
3. Do you think the lessons learned today will stay with you for life? Why?
4. Think of a lesson you have learned from a friend and tell it to the class.
5. Think of a lesson a pet might teach.
6. Why should you try to develop being happy while learning a lesson?
7. When you feel happy, do you think lessons are easier to learn or hard to learn? Give three reasons for your answer.
8. Everyone learns by listening. When a lesson is hard, what happens to your listening?

   Let's talk about listening in class sometime. Sit very quietly and just listen.

   List the things you hear when you listen deeply.

SENECA DISCIPLINE

BUILDING STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

The greatest compliment an early Seneca could receive was the recognition of his self-discipline. It was a "mark of distinction." It meant that this person had achieved a fine personality and practiced self-control. To lose one's self-control proved lack of self-discipline. This loss stripped the Seneca of his pride, dignity, respect and identity. For this reason, methods of instruction including games and contests centered around establishing self-discipline.

The importance of building worthy character traits was introduced to young Senecas at an early age. Wherever they looked, they saw that Mother Earth displayed a balanced existence. Throughout this natural existence there appeared to be a unity of purpose. Senecas thought that if they followed this same purpose, they too, might enjoy a balanced existence.

Upon entering the forests, Senecas realized that Mother Earth revolved around a fixed pattern. It was dependable and supported the needs of all living things. Everyone felt the greatest need was to be happy. Birds sang happily in the forests.

"Make a habit of being happy," said the Elders and teachers. Nature was gifted with countless seeds that, if nourished properly, might achieve happiness. Nature possessed a disciplined plan. Mother Earth carried it out. Let's see how the Senecas developed self-discipline from Nature's plan.

1. "We Live With Ourselves. We Must Know Who We Are"

This was the first statement the young Senecas had to deal with. It meant that we must recognized our personal talents and abilities; our strong likes and dislikes; our strength and our weaknesses. Since we live with ourselves, we are the only ones who know about these qualities.

2. "Walk In Balance"

This statement was the second idea to think about. It meant that Nature can be observed as an overall harmonious organization. We could join this balanced organization if we chose to seek this harmony.

3. "Who Are We"

This statement was the third idea. We knew, by instinct, that we had a definite place in this great world. Our individuality was seen by the personal character traits we used with relatives, friends, and strangers. Our personalities showed in everything we did. Certainly, we belonged where we were living.

4. "We Are What We Think"

This statement was the fourth idea we would think about. Self-discipline would test our ideas. Self-control was the result of these tests. Self-discipline listened. Self-control watched. The early Seneca believed that listening and watching were personal powers. The power of listening was a gift we were born with. The power of watching was an ability we had to develop. Listening was a greater power than watching. Our bodies did not have to work very hard to listen. But to watch, our bodies had to be looking, seeing, and doing something.

In addition to the powers of listening and watching, we had another power that helped to develop our disciplines. We called this power INNER KNOWING. To understand this fact, how many times have we wanted to do something wrong or say something unkind and a wee voice said "NO!" This was our inner knowing who spoke. When we disobeyed this voice, a bad feeling suddenly jumped into the center of our being. All of us have experienced this at some time or another.

Inner knowing was an important part of our nature. Seneca teaching relied upon this inner knowing to develop intellectual growth. All of the time, we act as we think. Our personal growth depends upon the way we think. We control ourselves according to the way we think. When our thinking is out of control, we create our own problems.

5. "Entering Into the Silence"

Entering into the silence was another method of developing self-discipline. This was the practice of listening to our very own thoughts. The woodlands provided the right atmosphere. When we listened to our thoughts, we learned that we possessed two sides to our nature. One was spiritual and the other was physical. Our spiritual nature was of moral principles. Our physical nature represented material influences. The spiritual side of us made life happy. The physical side was not always joyful. Learning the difference between the two helped us to build strength of character. Our Elders provided good examples of having strength of character. We watched them often.

Now that we have explained the ways of developing self-discipline and self-control, we'll tell you about the punishments that Seneca children received. In most cases, we punished ourselves. There were four questions we used as guidelines. They were:

1. "Am I happy doing what I am doing?"

If we were doing something that might cause us harm, our parents asked, "Are you happy doing what you are doing?" This question made us stop and think. If we answered, "Yes!", and were hurt, we accepted the blame. This was a good way to learn a lesson. We had punished ourselves. After learning this lesson, and seeing a friend do the same thing, we might tell him what happened to us. In this way, we helped each other to develop self-control. Teachers told us that we must seek happiness in everything we do. If not only made us happy but also made a habit of looking for happy things to do and say. "Happiness must be shared to bring about good feelings," said the Elders.

2. "What am I doing to create trouble?"

This meant that if we watched someone getting into trouble, and stood by doing nothing, we were adding to the trouble. If someone lied, he was called a liar. We lost respect for him. The early Senecas looked upon liars as unhappy people who had lost their self-control. People didn't listen to a liar. They tried to help him speak the truth. In this way, a bad habit could be cured.

Seneca Indian children were not slapped or struck by their parents. A person who slapped or hit another person was believed to be out of control.

The greatest punishment was to be ignored. We all want to be liked. When we did something wrong, no one spoke to us, saw us or acted as if we were around. This punishment made us feel unhappy. We would have to undo our wrong before we would be accepted back into the good graces of our families.

If the offense was stealing or telling a lie about someone else, or taking credit for someone's bravery, the possessions of that person were brought before the entire village and publicly burned. This punishment was so severe that few people felt the crime was worth it. Seeing this punishment was a good example.

Children who shouted, pouted, or told on others, especially for self-protection, were ignored. Temper tantrums were also ignored. It was thought to be a means of seeking attention. Boasting was another cause for being ignored. All the above actions showed lack of self-control.

Children cried when they were hurt. It was done to get help. Grown-ups did not show their pain when injured. By the time young Senecas had reached seven years of age, they cried little. At that age, they were no longer babies. If there was a need to cry, and sometimes there was, it was done privately. When a young Seneca's eyes showed that he had been crying, his parents would ask, "I trust you are feeling happy now?" Notice, they did not say "Hope" because HOPE left room for unhappy thoughts. "Trust" seemed a stronger word than "Hope."

3. "What am I doing to bring about peace and happiness?"

Most of the Senecas believed that happiness was a result of developing self-control, through their customs of discipline. Seneca Indian discipline entered into the work that was done. If everyone performed their duties with a joyous attitude, things would be done better. Work was divided up so that everyone had something to do in the villages. Each one performed the work they liked to do best. This made for happier people. The Senecas believed peace and happiness had a better chance to survive in the villages with this method. Today, people who are doing the work they like to do are happier than those who dislike their jobs. This was the way the early Senecas answered this question.

4. "How will I be remembered when I am gone?"

This question had two meanings. The first meaning happened while being with friends, relatives and strangers. Because we wanted them to like us, we tried to make a good impression. When we did not like them, we really didn't care to see them again. Also, we can feel if we are liked or not. This is because of our inner knowing. To the early Seneca it was important to have a personality with which people wanted to make friends.

The second part of the fourth question referred to after death. If we would live a kindly life, others might say "He, or she, had developed a fine character." This statement meant honor and distinction to the family. Everyone strived to attain this goal.

Building strength of character was the responsibility of each individual, according to his own wishes. Listening and watching, with this in mind, made the early Senecas respect the customs that had been established. It allowed them to share their gifts and abilities with people of all ages. It helped them to build sincere happiness into their lives that reflected the peace and contentment they found in the atmosphere of the forests.

THINGS TO DO:

1. A Game.

This is a game to develop our listening and watching. It happens on an outing in the woods. One person is selected as a leader for each group. If there are about twenty people, the group should be divided in half. It is better not to have more than ten in a group, including the leader. This is a game of "Follow the Leader."

1. The leader stands ahead of the line. Each player makes sure that there are at least three feet (3') between him and the one in front of him. This is very important.
2. The leader thinks of twelve separate things to do. He must remember them in order.
3. One at a time, he performs each action. The person behind him does the same thing. Each person watches the player who is directly in front of him and not the leader. He must also remember the order the actions are given.
4. The twelfth action is making believe that something is picked up and placed in a pouch. The others must guess later what it is that was put in the pouch.
5. The leader takes the group back to an open space where everyone sits down in a circle.
6. One at a time, the contestants perform the actions in the center while everyone watches. No one speaks. This is using self-control.
7. At the end, the leader tells what he put in his pouch.
8. The ones who guessed correctly stand.
9. If all things are done correctly the player receives a score of 12. This means he has become a whole person. The reward is experiencing that "good feeling of achievement."

After the game is over, notice how comfortable everyone looks. Think about how great we feel to be comfortable. People who are smiling usually feel comfortable.

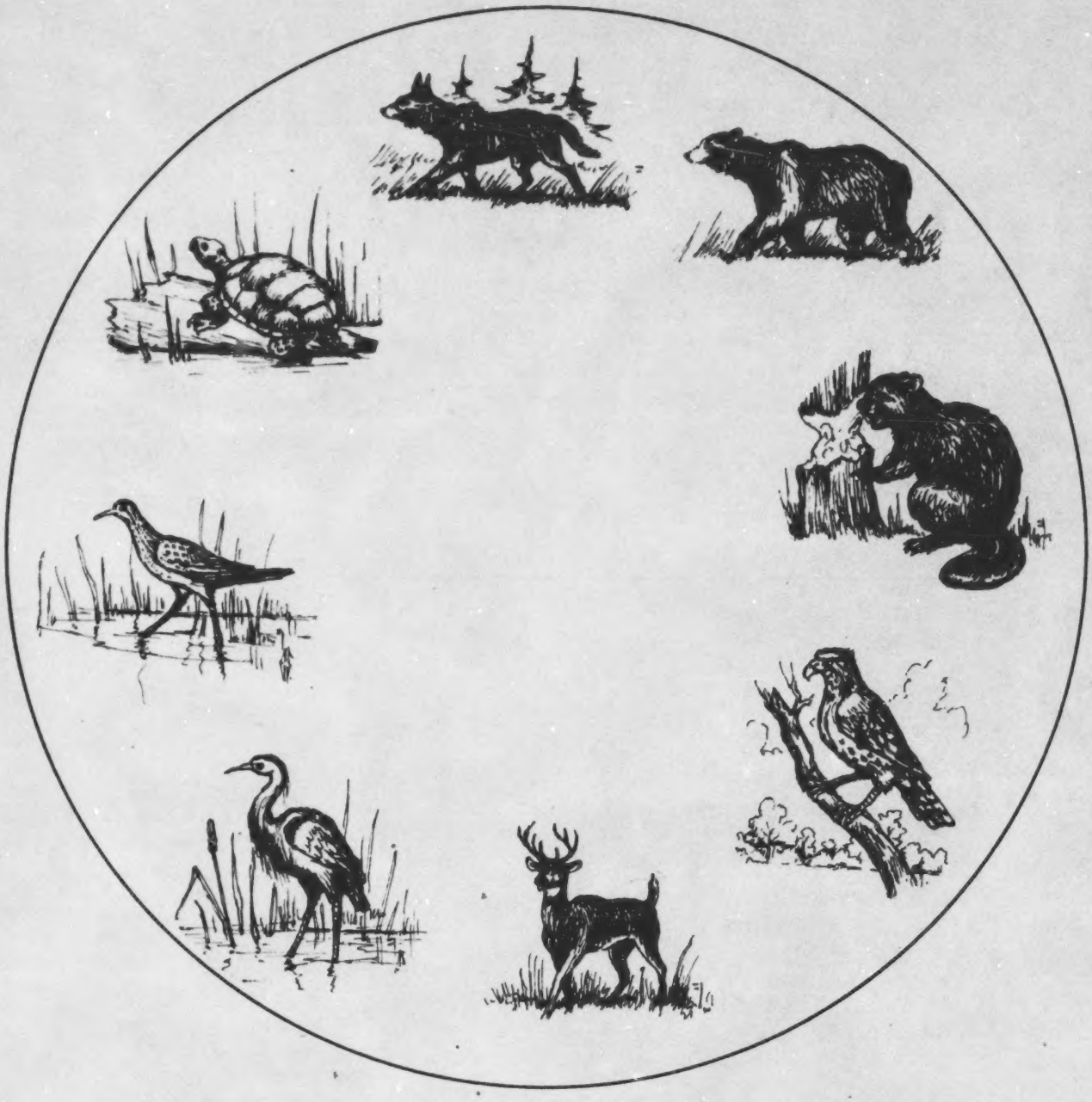
If you remember only a few things, be grateful for the ones remembered, not what was forgotten. Every time the game is played, each one will improve. Play it again and see!

Each person should have the opportunity to be a leader. Look forward to your chance. Try not to use the same actions as others. This develops your creative ability. It also helps us to see our strong points and where we are weak. Only we can see these things. Only we can improve on them.

In this game, we have the chance to develop satisfying, worthy, likeable character traits. Now, we can talk about the personalities that good discipline develops.

There is one more feeling we must experience concerning our own areas of discipline and this is getting into ourselves to know the difference between using our self-discipline and self-control. When we know this difference, we are well on the way to building a strong character. Self-discipline is spiritual. Self-control is physical.

PART II - CLAN LEGENDS



INTRODUCTION:

AROUND THE COUNCIL FIRE

Among the Senecas, there was a Clan system that bound the Nation together. Every Seneca belonged to a Clan; another name for a family. Each Clan member was believed to be a relative. Children belonged to the Clan of the mother. Today, children carry their father's name.

Eight Clans are represented in the Seneca Nation. They are the Wolf, the Bear, the Beaver, the Hawk, the Deer, the Heron, the Snipe and the Turtle. Clans are not tribes. Senecas prefer to be called Clans of the Seneca Nation.

Each Clan taught ways to live in balance with Mother Earth. The early Senecas used the legends as teaching guides. They were known as teaching legends and when used were told in the deepest reverence.

Around the Council fires, the Elders were the principal speakers. They told how the Clans were responsible for helping our ancestors find self-identity. The idea of the "Oneness of Nature" found its source through observation of many Clan families living off the abundance of Mother Earth. Clan families were governed by one common law. The law was a gift upheld by harmony and was called the "Gift of Balance."

Each time a Clan Legend was told, the Elders began in the following words:

> "Many moons ago, long before there were People Beings, Natureland was inhabited by Creature People and Plant People. Great peace dwelled within these Clans. They knew who they were, what work they had to do, why they did it and how they continued life after life. They all belonged to one great family and lived in balance with each other."

Later on, People Beings entered into natureland. They did not possess the "Gift of Balance." They would have the learn how to live in balance. But People Beings had another gift, known as the "Gift of Understanding." Through this gift, they discovered that they too could live in "balance" by observing the Creature and Plant People.

The People Beings understood that the Earth was their Mother, the Sky was their Father, the Sun was their Grandfather, the Moon was their Grandmother and the Water was their Medicine. All members of this family were created by the "Great Mystery." (known today as the Great Spirit or God.)

As time passed, legends were told by the speakers from each clan. Sharing this ancient wisdom deepened the devotion of the listeners to Mother Earth and to the Great Spirit. Every thought and action displayed thanksgiving for the gifts that surrounded the clan because of the lessons they taught. Each child was schooled by word of mouth, song, dance and countless examples of harmonious living.

Self-discipline was the rule around these council fires and complete silence prevailed. Should there have been an interruption during the telling of a legend, the speaker stopped and when the legend was again resumed, the speaker started from the beginning. No one wanted the legends to be stopped so they listened quietly.

The legends have survived the passing of time. In recording them here, may they again nurture a feeling of harmony and bring better understanding to those of us who are seeking ways of living in balance today.

THE WOLF DECREE

ON THE
TRAIL OF HARMONY

It was a moonlit night as the wolves sang their songs that echoed throughout the shadowy woodlands. Presently, the air stood still while a "VOICE" whispered through their heads.

"AS WOLVES, YOU WERE BORN WITH CERTAIN GIFTS AND ABILITIES THAT GUIDE YOU IN WAYS OF LIVING IN HARMONY. AT PRESENT, THESE GIFTS ARE UNKNOWN TO YOU. NOW IS THE TIME FOR YOUR CHIEF TO FIND THE "TRAIL OF HARMONY" AND LEARN WHAT THESE GIFTS ARE. AFTER TRAVELING THESE TRAILS, HE WILL TEACH OTHER CREATURES THE TRUTHS HE HAS LEARNED."
"THE GREAT SPIRIT HAS SPOKEN."

The wolves were inspired by what they had heard and raised their voices in songs of thanksgiving.

For many moons, the Wolf Chief had enjoyed his life hunting and frolicking with his pack. Life would be different now, since he had heard the decree. Not long after, while he was hunting, he came to a stream and stopped to drink. In wolf custom, he stretched out to take a short nap. When his body slipped into a restful sleep, he heard a "VOICE" speak:

"WHILE SEARCHING FOR THE "TRAIL OF HARMONY"
TO SEE WAYS TO PEACE AND GENTLENESS
USE EVERY GIFT AND ABILITY
AND LEARN THE TRUTHS OF EQUALITY."
"THE GREAT SPIRIT HAS SPOKEN!"

The Wolf Chief awoke with the strange message ringing in his head. Suddenly, from the corner of his eye, he saw a dark shadow dart by. It was a rabbit scrambling toward the nearby woods. The wolf chased after him. The rabbit slipped into the dense undergrowth and disappeared from view. Without stopping, the wolf leaped after him. He lost his prey and came to a standstill. While he stood, he wondered if this narrow path he was on could be the "Trail of Harmony." Curiosity led him on. Soon the path through the wild brush narrowed. Thorns, thistles and burrs hung on all sides, while a prickly mat blanketed the ground. Each step was agonizing. His eyes were smarting with burrs, his paws were pierced with thorns and his coat was matted with thistles. Frantically, he tried to free himself. Fear clutched his throat as flying creatures crawled up his nose and drilled into his ears. His body stiffened with every thump of his heart. Needles of pain shot up his legs as hot fangs of snakes pumped venom into his skin.

The injured wolf was exhausted and slumped to the ground. He did not know how long he was there, for there was no way to measure time. As he lay there, he cried out, "Oh Great Spirit! I am trapped! What shall I do?" Then a soft "VOICE" answered his plea:

"THIS IS A LESSON YOU ALONE MUST LEARN.
ABILITY TO THINK - WISDOM TO LEARN."
"THE GREAT SPIRIT HAS SPOKEN!"

The Wolf Chief listened and felt a warm glow flow throughout his body. It soothed his spirit. "This must be the first path," thought the wolf. "I must look for peace and be gentle and learn the truths of equality."

Slowly, he lifted his paws and pulled out the thorns with his teeth. Next, he licked the sores with his tongue. He learned that there was medicine on his tongue. At once, he realized why the creatures had attacked him. He had destroyed their living quarters. Quietly, he whispered, "I'm sorry for the things I have done." Carefully, he backed through the tunnel he had made until he caught a breath of fresh air brushing across his face. Not one of the angry creatures molested him as he left the tangled underbrush.

Gleefully, he stretched his head to the endless sky and sang his song of thanksgiving for the lessons he had learned. After pulling the remaining burrs from his coat, he returned to his pack.

Following a welcoming feast, the Wolf Chief called a council and told them of what he had learned. "I have traveled the first path and visited the "TRAIL OF HARMONY," WHERE I LEARNED THE TRUTH OF PATIENCE, FORETHOUGHT AND THE USE OF MY GIFTS."

As the true leader of his pack, the wolf sang his solo to alert the neighboring packs of his newly acquired wisdom. The forest, glens and valleys echoed the "Songs of the Wolves," as pack after pack conveyed the lessons of their Chief.

Da Naho

THE
SECOND PATH

Many moons had passed and the Wolf Chief began to wonder what lessons he would learn on the second path.

Not knowing where to begin, he climbed a nearby hill so he could watch the Sun open his eyes. "The Sun follows the skyworld. Maybe he can help me find the second path," thought the wolf. He watched the Sun lift his head above the rim of the sky. His rays crept along the Skytrail and when they reached the wolf, covered him with a glorious feeling. The Wolf Chief raised his head high and sang a song:

"Oh Great Spirit,
I am waiting for the next lesson.
I raise my voice in thanksgiving
For the lessons I have already learned.
I will follow the Sun as he journeys
Across the skytrail."

A soft "VOICE" whispered through his head:

"YOUR NEXT LESSON IN LEARNING ABOUT THE TRUTH OF HARMONY, IS THAT OF RENEWING YOUR BODY THROUGH REST."

"THE GREAT SPIRIT HAS SPOKEN!"

The Wolf Chief was so excited, he leaped over tree stumps and rocks, through the forest and fields chasing the dancing shadows cast by the Sun. Suddenly, a rock giant stood before him. The wolf stared at the towering figure while the rays quickly climbed his stony form and disappeared from view. The wolf began to follow the rays and after crawling a few paces from the ground, he lost his footing and fell.

Many times the Sun visited the silent wolf and brushed his coat with warm, soothing caresses. The injured wolf did not know how long he was there. He had no way to measure time. Presently, the Great Spirit whispered:

"AWAKEN, WOLF CHIEF. THINK OF THE LESSON OF THE SECOND PATH!"
"THE GREAT SPIRIT HAS SPOKEN!"

The wolf began to stir after he heard the welcome whisper. He opened his eyes and there was the Sun in all his glory smiling at him. The wolf was no longer hurt. His body had been healed from the fall. Reaching his head high, the Wolf Chief sang:

"I sing my song of thanksgiving
For the lessons I've learned in living.
My body will heal the best
When it's renewed with a rest."

The Wolf Chief happily sang as he returned to his pack. They greeted him with joy as he had been away many moons and they feared that he was lost.

He asked the best hunters to round up food for a feast of thanksgiving. Every wolf pack in nearby hunting grounds was invited to come. After the food was found and the wolves had arrived, the Chief reviewed the lessons on the Trail of Harmony and Second Path.

Since that time, when Wolf packs sang the thanksgiving song, neighboring wolves joined in and all through the woodland the nightly "songs of the wolves" have filled the air. After the concert was over, the happy wolves silently crept into their dens and snuggled down to sleep with the soothing aroma of leaves in their nostrils and the lulling sound of the forest in their ears.

THE WOLF DECREE

THE LESSON OF THE THIRD PATH

The Great Spirit looked upon the sleeping wolves and whispered into the ear of their Chief:

"ONE MORE JOURNEY YOU MUST TAKE
TO BALANCE FOOD FOR YOUR SAKE.
THESE GIFTS ARE GIVEN EQUALLY
THAT ALL MAY LIVE IN HARMONY."

"THE GREAT SPIRIT HAS SPOKEN!"

The Wolf Chief stretched in animal custom, and crept into the clearing. The Sun smiled a greeting and sent his rays to play upon the Chief's back. "Gifts are given equally, that all may live in harmony," was the thought that kept running through his head. He thought he had been dreaming. Presently, something stirred on the ground. Curiosity aroused the wolf. He looked down to see. A column of ants formed a straight line and marched toward a rock a short distance away. The Chief jumped to his feet and slyly sniffed along the ground. A unusual scent twitched his nose. He was about to leap over the rock when he suddenly remembered the lessons from the first path teaching patience and forethought. Using his gifts, he carefully peeked around the rock. To his utter surprise, his eyes saw an astonishing sight. A field glistened with bright, red berries sending a scent that made his mouth water. Next, he saw all kinds of creatures hungrily munching the berries. Creeping closer, he sniffed the fruit and smudged a sticky substance on his nose. When he licked his nose, it was the best tasting sample he had ever licked.

Instead of being a sharing Chief, he promptly joined the rest and gulped berry after berry as fast as he could. Before long, he was so stuffed, he could hardly move. So he waddled to a nearby pine tree and fell asleep.

All at once, pain began to gnaw at his insides. He rolled and turned. No matter what position he took, it grew worse. Fearful of being torn apart, he called to the Great Spirit. "Oh! Great Spirit, what have I done to cause this pain?"

The Great Spirit answered:

"GULPING FOOD COMES FROM GREED. THINK HOW HAPPY EACH LIFE COULD BE

SHARING GIFTS IS WHAT WE NEED. IF ALL WOULD SHARE IN HARMONY!"

"THE GREAT SPIRIT HAS SPOKEN."

The Wolf Chief had learned another lesson. Through his recent suffering and having renewed his body after the required rest, the Chief returned to his pack a much wiser leader. He called a council to give thanks for the lessons he had learned.

While the moon walked across the Skytrail, he raised his voice in a grateful song. Neighboring wolves stopped to listen for they knew the call would tell them of his mission.

Every creature who heard his sound, honored the Wolf Chief for the wisdom he shared. He told about the medicine on each one's tongue and the healing of sores was now being done. Patience and forethought and the use of every gift brought happier creatures into a balance they had missed.

Mending of tired bodies through restful sleep allowed the Sun to send his warm, rays to brush the fur of resting animals.

The last lesson showed what greed had done to the wolf and proved that sharing was really more kind. All these lessons were examples of TRUTH that made life worth living to the Wolf.

His voice soared high over fields, glens and valleys. Across the watery places his message was heard. This wise, friendly Chief has fulfilled his decree and the gifts he saw were no longer a mystery. Down through the ages, in memory he still sings:

"OH! GREAT SPIRIT, I FOUND THREE TRAILS
AND LEARNED THROUGH PAIN, TRUTH NEVER FAILS.
ACTS OF PEACE AND GENTLENESS, TOO
OPENED MY EYES AND WISDOM GREW.
I PROMISE TO TEACH UNTIL THIS LIFE ENDS
HOW PEACE AND HARMONY ALWAYS BLENDS."

Da Naho

HOT STICK

Hot Stick is a favorite game of the WOLF CLAN

1. Equipment:

   One 30" dowel (a broom handle is excellent). The ends are often decorated with leather thongs and feathers.

2. Participants:

   Two challengers who are about the same size in height and weight.

3. Procedure:

   Challengers face each other and hold the stick between them. The left hand of each player grasps the end of the stick. The right hand of each player is next to the other player's left hand. The stick is held firmly, with arms straight down. Feet are separated, with legs rigid, about two (2) feet apart.

4. Object of the Contest:

   The object is to maintain complete control of the stick, while gradually forcing it to either the right or left, and raise it so that the opponent's hand loses control, or leverage, of the stick. This is a muscle-coordinating contest.

5. Fouls:

   A) Talking or laughing (causes loss of control)
   B) Leaning (to throw opponent off balance)
   C) Shifting feet
   D) Bending of elbows

This contests uses the power of concentration, strength and skill. The reason it is called "Hot Stick," the energy exerted on the stick causes it to become warm. Both boys and girls enjoy this game.

6. It is sometimes wise to place a time limit. Usually about one (1) minute.

HOT-STICK

THE BEAR DECREE

BROTHERLY LOVE

Dreams were believed to be messages from the Great Spirit. For this reason, their meanings were faithfully followed.

A Seneca Chief had twin sons, of whom he wished one might earn the title of "Chief." He went into the woods to listen to Mother Earth for counseling. This was the custom of all the people. It was in the Fall when Mother Earth was getting ready for the long winter sleep. The beauty of the forest during this time of the year attracted the Chief. He found a place beneath a tree and sat down to enjoy the surroundings. In the atmosphere of the forest he soon fell asleep. Before his dreamy eyes, he saw the following:

In the neighboring forest lived a Bear Chief. He had twin sons. While they were growing up, they learned all the necessary things bears

had to know. The time was drawing near for the Chief to decide which twin would become the next Chief. This meant that a contest would be scheduled. Each Chief always wished to have a son take his place. This was not always possible. Every bear who aspired to become a chief had to earn it.

The Chief called a council to set the time for the contest. The first event was to visit the outer woods to learn how the other forest creatures lived. The following full moon was the time set for the young bears to depart. A feast was prepared to celebrate this great departure. The young cubs would remain in the other woods for a year and return on the same day a year later.

The first bear was so anxious to leave, he crept into the forest while his twin was saying goodbye to his family and friends. He was so happy about his new freedom that he romped and played with his forest friends. At the watering places, they asked him how he planned to learn the lessons of the outer woods. He laughed and said, "There's plenty of time for that."

The second bear carefully marked the trail he traveled, so that he could find his way back when it was time to return. He told the friends that he met to help him select what he should eat, where to find it and how to take the best possible care of himself. His new friends were very helpful. Soon all bears would be entering into a long sleep, so they needed to eat a lot.

The second bear often thought about his brother and wished that he was doing as well as he. The cold came when the Frost Chief visited Mother Earth. By this time, all Nature was ready to snuggle down for the long sleep.

The first bear, having made no preparation, found his newly acquired friends too busy to play with him. This made him sad. So he didn't care how he looked, letting thistles and burrs mat his coat and mud cake on his paws. Because he was careless about what he ate, his mouth became full of sores and he could scarcely eat. No one wanted to bother with him. He was too sick and hungry to care. There was nothing he could do but just slump down right where he was.

Neighboring bears who lived in the outer woods knew about the contest. When they came upon the sickly bear, they thought that he must be one of the chief's twins. They coaxed him to a hollowed out tree stump and covered him with leaves and twigs, hoping that he might survive the long, cold sleep. Because of their love and respect for the bear chief, they stayed close by to protect him from the hunters.

Finally, the white blanket of snow covered all the sleeping creatures. Many moons passed, when the Springtime Sun sent his rays to warm Mother Earth. Sleeping plants yawned and awoke to greet the new dawn. The winds whispered, "It's spring," to all the sleeping creatures. The sick bear heard the awakening sounds and tried to lift his head. But he was too weak and fell back again.

The second bear, having gained great knowledge from the creatures, busily brushed his coat with his tongue until it was clean and shiny. Then, locating the marks he had made, headed for home. When he arrived, the bear clan danced and sang with joy, for he had grown into a handsome creature. A feast of thanksgiving was arranged in honor of his safe return.

Time passed and the first bear had not yet returned. Fearing for his safety, the second bear asked his father if he could form a hunting party to search for his twin brother. The bear chief gave his consent. Amid joy and sadness the party left.

The searching party met many friends of the first bear and remembered that he was a likeable fellow who only wanted to play. They promised if they heard about him they would let the party know. Days passed and the search continued. Finally, a message was received from the birds that a sickly bear had been found. They said that he could scarcely move because of his weakness. Encouraged, the second bear raised his voice in a bellow that echoed throughout the outer woods. Everyone listened, but there was no answer. He bellowed again and, at a distance, heard a low agonizing whimper. Hurriedly, they raced in the direction of the sound and came upon the pitiful bear in all his misery. Even though he was a sorrowful sight, his brother gave him a strong bear hug. Everyone was happy to find him alive.

A message was sent back to the Chief to inform him of locating the twin. They would return after he had regained his strength. Before long, the first bear was ready to leave the outer woods. The bears thanked their friends and headed for home. When they reached their family, there was great rejoicing.

The second bear had earned the right to become the Chief. The first had many more lessons to learn. But he was willing to be an assistant to his brother. The dream ended!

When the Chief returned to his village, he knew the dream had special meaning to him. He told his twins about it. To his surprise, the first twin said to his father that he would have wasted his time just as the first bear. He asked the Chief to allow his younger twin to become Chief because he had truly earned it.

A Council was called. During the meeting a silence drifted over the gathering as a "Voice" whispered:

"HONOR THE SON
HIS WISHES BE DONE
AS SACHEM OF THE NATION."

"HONOR THE SON,
THE WISDOM HE WON
THE CHIEF OF THE NATION."

"HONOR THE BEAR
AND NAME THE CLAN
WHO TAUGHT BROTHERLY LOVE
TO NATURELAND."
"THE GREAT SPIRIT HAS SPOKEN!"

The Seneca Chief followed the decree of the Great Spirit and proclaimed the villagers who wished to practice brotherly love as members of the Bear Clan.

LONG STICK

Long Stick is the favorite contest of the BEAR CLAN.

1. Equipment:

   An eight-foot sapling pole with bark removed. The pole should be about 1 3/4 at one end - 2 1/4 inch thick at the other. Both girls and boys like this contest. There can be a variety of poles.

2. Participants:

   All ages. It is a family physical fitness contest.

3. Procedure:

   A. The pole is held with both hands tight together at the thickest end.
   B. The right, pointed end is resting on the ground.
   C. A signal is given. Keeping the two hands close together at the thickest end, lift the pole so that it is parallel to the ground.
   D. The left hand moves over the right and grasps the pole right next to the right hand, leaving no space.
   E. The right hand moves under the left.
   F. The pole is momentarily held by one hand during each move.
   G. While hands are moving, the pole must be held parallel to the ground.
   H. After both hands reach the thinner end of the pole, without the opposite end touching the ground, return in the same manner to the heavy end.

Contestants often decorated their poles after conquering them. It was a reminder of their physical growth, skill and determination.

During self-development, lighter poles are used. Poles get longer and heavier as skill develops.

LONG-STICK

THE BEAVER DECREE

FOLLOWS ORDERS, IS HELPFUL, INDUSTRIOUS

Ga-nyah-di-yoh, meaning "beautiful lake," was the name of a Seneca village at the joining of two rivers, where the people had lived happily for many moons.

One day, while the Senecas were enjoying the customary activities of the village, a strange thing happened. All day the Sun had been shining brilliantly. Suddenly, it slid behind a dense, black cloud, plunging Ga-nyah-di-yoh into total darkness. Wind blew, rain fell, thunder roared and lightening flashed in a spectacular display. Whenever these forces visited the village, the Senecas were not fearful because they regarded the forces of Nature in deep reverence. They stood in the rain, singing songs of thanksgiving, as the cool droplets bathed their faces. They understood the Great Spirit performed his "Magnificent Miracles," by using the forces of Nature for cleansing and nourishing all of Natureland.

Gradually, the sounds slowly drifted into an atmosphere of peace. During the silence, the "Voice" of the Great Spirit whispered:

"THE BEAVER DECREE IS A LESSON TO SEE FOR LIVING FOREVER IN HARMONY."

"THE GREAT SPIRIT HAS SPOKEN"

The Senecas remained quiet and wondered what this message meant. They asked their Chief for an explanation. The Chief reminded them that great rains had often caused the two rivers to spill over thier banks to sweep their possessions away. He looked at the Skyworld and saw symbols that said the rains would continue. For this reason, he advised the people to move their belongings to higher ground. After the moving was completed, the Senecas gathered at the turtle mound and entered into a "Great Silence," a custom practiced for many generations. While the people where thinking thoughts of thanksgiving, the Beaver Chief, by chance, had passed by.

It happened that the Beaver Chief also heard the message and knew the time had come for him to be inspired by the Great Spirit. Also, he had heard about the Wolf Decree and knew that beaver had gifts that would help all creatures live in harmony.

He called a council of all beaver and told them of their responsibility for sharing their gifts. While they listened to their leader, he suddenly stood on his hind legs and directed the beaver choppers to cut trees and prepare them into logs. He ordered the beaver swimmers to guide the logs downstream toward Ga-Nyah-di-yoh. He called upon the beaver lashers to collect the ties for the logs and told the beaver gleaners to keep the lashers supplied with ties to bind the logs together.

"I HAVE BEEN INSPIRED TO BUILD THE LARGEST DAM TO DIVERT THE RIVER FLOW AT GA-NYAH-DI-YOH, AS A SERVICE TO THE SENECAS."

The Chief asked the birds who often listened in to all the council meetings if they would announce the Beaver Decree to every beaver in the surroundings, telling them of the decree. Every beaver was needed to complete this gigantic endeavor and they were to come at once.

All through the night the beaver worked. Only the flashes of lightning saw the progress they were making. When the Sun lifted his head above the rim of the sky the dam was completed. The beaver, proud of the achievement, lined up on top of the largest dam ever built to await the return of the villagers.

When the Senecas saw the spectacular achievement of the beaver, they rushed up to thank them. Immediately, the Chief of the Senecas called a council to arrange for a Feast of Thanksgiving. The birds carried this message far and wide of the great Beaver accomplishment. Creatures of every kind headed toward Ga-nyah-di-yoh.

The Sun smiled on the day of the feast. Beaver came from afar to see the greatest dam every built. The Seneca chief addressed the crowd who came to honor the Beaver. He stood at the turtle mound so that everyone could hear him and said:

"Friends, relatives, visitors and Nature creatures, we have gathered to honor our benefactors, the beaver. They have shown us how to divert the rushing waters of the two rivers to save our village from destruction. The huge dam was inspired by the Great Spirit. We have seen another way to live in harmony with Nature. From this day forward, the members of this Seneca village will belong to the Beaver Clan. Our descendents will carry on the lessons learned from the beaver. The ways of the Beaver are: being industrious, following orders and sharing gifts and abilities with fellow creatures. May we always live in harmony as they have shown by their example."

Everyone present raised their voices in songs of thanksgiving. The harmony that filled the air was beyond description as birds and other creatures offered their renditions.

"ANOTHER MIRACLE HAS BEEN BORN,
ANOTHER GIFT HAS BEEN SHARED
ANOTHER BLESSING LEARNED FROM THE BEAVER
TO LIVE IN HARMONY BECAUSE THEY CARED."

Nyah-weh Nyah-weh Nyah-weh*

Da Naho

*Nyah-weh..Thank you

HOOP-RACE

Hoop-Race is a favorite game of the BEAVER CLAN

1. Equipment:

   A hoop used by "Hoop Dancers," or it can be made from plastic hose. The diameter should be about twenty-two to twenty-four inches.

2. Participants:

   This is a team game. Usually, the teams are divided into clans. The number in each team depends upon how many are in the group.

3. Procedure:

   Each team forms a circle. All players face clockwise. A starter is selected. The starter passes the hoop over his head and down over his body, stepping out and holding the hoop overhead, so that the next player behind him can grasp it. Each player does the same thing, until the hoop returns to the starter. The last person reverses the procedure by putting his feet through the hoop and drawing it up over his head, holding it so that the next person can do the same. The hoop thus goes back around the circle until it again reaches the starter. He places it on the ground, steps into and out of it, then moves forward so that the one behind him can do the same. The entire circle of contestants moves up to, in and out of, the hoop. When all the players have "run the hoop," they sit down and the hoop is again passed overhead to the end and returned to the starter before this series of "hoop passes" is complete. The team circle that finishes all the movements first, wins.

4. Object of the Contest:

   The object is to pass the hoop as fast as possible with complete teamwork; each member being alert, so as not to slow down the team.

5. Fouls:

   A. Talking or laughing (This can cause team breakdown.)
   B. Forgetting what comes next
   C. Turning heads around (Being too nosey ruins attention.)

6. This game develops teamwork and self-control. Also, many people can play at the same time.

THE HAWK DECREE

SHARING WITH OTHERS

In Ja-go-wen-de, a Seneca Indian village, located along the swift waters that flowed toward a big lake, lived a skilled hunter. His keen eyes helped him enjoy great success whenever he went hunting. This made him popular among his people because his skill brought in the needed food and hides for the whole village. The Senecas were friendly toward him and called him Big Arrow, a name that made him quite proud.

It happened that he began to boast about his skill. One day he shot his arrow into the sky and, to his surprise, a duck fell at his feet. He aimed again and the same thing happened. "I won't have to leave the village any more. All I have to do is aim my arrow into the sky." This new skill made him boast to his friends. He told the hunters that he wasn't hunting with them any more. All he had to do was shoot an arrow into the sky. The people didn't believe him and asked that he prove his statement. Before the entire village he proved it by shooting more duck in the same way.

The Senecas were so amazed that they praised him even more. The hunters were disappointed that Big Arrow refused to hunt with them. They remembered how much food and hides Big Arrow shared with all the villagers. Things would not be the same and the hunters were becoming envious of Big Arrow. The villagers began to lose interest in watching because of his boasting. This saddened him. One evening when no one came to see him, he quietly left Ja-go-wen-de and was forgotten.

Many moons passed and the hunters found animals and fowl growing scarce. They recalled this did not happen while Big Arrow hunted with them. They began to wonder what happened to him. No one seemed to miss him until now. After asking others about his whereabouts, it was suggested that a searching party be organized to track him down.

Several days were spent looking for him. Finally, the tracking party returned to Ja-go-wen-de and reported they failed to find him.

It happened that a Medicine man saw a large pile of dead birds and animals while he was gathering herbs. This seemed strange to him and he offered to lead the trackers to this place. As they approached, a foul odor filled the air. Creeping closer they heard a low moaning sound. Suddenly they stopped! There was Big Arrow staring at a pile of dead creatures. Before they spoke, a giant bird dropped from the sky and hovered over the smelly heap. While flapping his wings, he spoke to Big Arrow:

"BIG ARROW, STAND BEFORE ME
THEN YOU SHALL SEE THE REVEALING OF A DECREE!"

Immediately, the sky became filled with all kinds of flying creatures that swarmed over the mound of dead birds and animals. The ground was moving, as the trackers watched insects march toward the pile. Together, they ate, from above and from below until the pile was completely consumed. The trackers, Medicine Man and Big Arrow stood spellbound at the sight. The moaning stopped when the creatures moved away. The foul air was replaced by the aroma of woodland pine, cleared by a gentle breeze. Not a sound was heard. During this moment of silence, a soft "voice" whispered:

"A DECREE YOU HAVE SEEN,
BEFORE ONE BRAVE AND PROUD.
THE BALANCE OF NATURE
SHARING OF GIFTS ENDOWED.
THE HAWK IS THE CHIEF
WHO TAUGHT THIS LESSON
HONOR HIS GIFT...
TO SHARE THIS BLESSING!"

"THE GREAT SPIRIT HAS SPOKEN!"

Big Arrow had not seen the Senecas approach as he hung his head in shame. Now he realized why the people in Ja-go-wen-de ignored him. It was because of his proud and boasting ways. In addition to this, his sadness had caused him to kill many creatures, bringing sorrow to the families of the forest.

The Medicine Man walked over to Big Arrow and invited him to return to the village to tell of the lesson he learned from the hawk. The trackers also felt ashamed. They had been envious of Big Arrow. The Medicine Man called the trackers to talk with Big Arrow. He wanted them to tell him of the shortage in food and hides. "If you return with us, our hunting will be better," they informed him. Big Arrow agreed to hunt again and do as the hawk had taught.

When the people saw Big Arrow they rejoiced. A feast of thanksgiving was held to explain the lesson the Hawk had revealed. During the festivities, the Seneca Chief proclaimed that all the inhabitants of Ja-go-wen-de would honor the Hawk.

From that time on, hunters only killed what they could use. And what they could not use they shared with the other creatures of Mother Earth.

Da naho

LITTLE EAGLE SPREAD

The Little Eagle Spread is the favorite contest of the HAWK CLAN

This contest, one of endurance, is usually used to break ties, and to select candidates to represent the clans.

1. Participants:

   Any number. This contest can also be used as a team game.

2. Procedure:

   Contestants stand in a wide circle with plenty of room between them. Everyone faces the same direction. They lie on their side, with legs and feet extended in straight alignment, one foot on top of the other. Monitors may check. When signal is given, everyone raises on one arm, with the other arm extended up. Back must be straight, not sagging. Contestants hold this position for one (1) minute. If they fall, they must remain down and absolutely quiet. The ones who fall are not out of the game.

3. Object of the Contest:

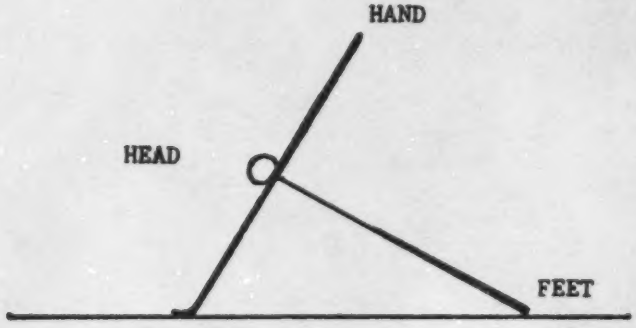
   The last one standing, wins. In a team contest: After one minute, the ones who are still standing are counted. The greatest number standing, wins for the team or clan.

4. Fouls:

   A) Talking or laughing
   B) Knocking someone else down

5. Team Contest:

   Counting the number standing after holding Contest in both directions: right hand holding up the body, then the left.



THE DEER DECREE

ENDURANCE AND PROPER BREATHING

In the woodlands, surrounding the twin rivers called Laughing Waters and singing Waters, lived a Deer Clan. They had taught the Senecas many ways to live in harmony with each other. They even allowed their weaker brothers to be killed for food, clothing and for other uses. However, another Decree had to be fulfilled to bring honor to them in the eyes of the Senecas.

It happened that four young hunters were stalking game in the woods when they came upon a strange thundering sound. They stopped to listen. From the direction of the sound, they saw clouds of dust rising through the trees a short distance away. Quietly, they crept toward the sound and eventually came to a clearing where an amazing sight met their eyes. A large, stately deer stood in the center of the field, surrounded by a circle of deer. They faced the magnificent leader; their eyes glued to every move he made. The hunters stared spellbound! Suddenly, the huge deer pawed the ground four times. With a thunder, the rest turned and ran in a circle with unbelievable speed. As suddenly as they had begun, they stopped, turned and faced the leader. The hunters watched the same routine over and over again. They thought this would be a wonderful opportunity to make a killing.

Carefully, they aimed at the great deer. But the arrows fell short. They shot the second time and the arrows missed the target. The third time, they were more careful with their aim. Again the arrows fell short.

"There's something strange going on," said one of the hunters.

"I have a good eye. Let me try. This time the large one will certainly fall," said another. He aimed carefully and the arrow pierced the leader's eye. He shook his head and the arrow dropped to the earth. The hunters were bewildered.

After watching the deer repeat their strange dance, the hunters decided to rest. They settled down upon the ground, then noticed the deer had done the same. Before long, the young Senecas had fallen asleep. While they dozed they were visited by a dream. The mammoth deer appeared to them and said:

"JOIN THE DEER CIRCLE AND LEARN A NEW MIRACLE."

"THE GREAT SPIRIT HAS SPOKEN!"

Immediately, they awoke to see the great deer standing in front of them.

"Welcome! my friends. I have been waiting for you. You have just heard the "Voice" that announces new gifts. Did you know that you have dreamed?"

The young hunters couldn't believe what they had seen or heard. But, when the deer turned to leave, they obediently followed him and joined the others in the circle.

"Brothers, we share our gifts and abilities with you, so that you might learn how to live in peace and harmony. Join us! We will show you how to breathe and run great distances with grace and agility. I am Deerfoot, the Chief."

No one knows how long it took the deer to teach the hunters these gifts.

Finally, the young Senecas returned to their village. They were welcomed with great joy and thanksgiving, for their families feared that they had been lost. Promptly, the young men told of their strange experiences and demonstrated the newly acquired skills.

The Chief notified the neighboring villagers, inviting them to attend a feast of thanksgiving honoring the deer. During the feast, silence descended upon everyone who attended. Through the woods appeared the most stately deer anyone had ever seen. While he stood, with all eyes upon him, he said:

"I AM DEERFOOT...
THE DEER DECREE, FULFILLED THROUGH ME
HAS SEALED OUR LIVES IN HARMONY.
OUR GIFTS OF GRACE AND AGILITY
ADDS STRENGTH TO HUMAN ABILITY."

"DEERFOOT HAS SPOKEN."

A state of deep reverence surrounded the people after hearing the deer speak. The greatest lesson the Senecas have ever learned is that the Great Spirit reveals His power through Nature's creatures. There would be countless other times this "Voice" would be heard. The Senecas were grateful that another Decree had been fulfilled and knowledge of more gifts understood.

On that day, the chief proclaimed that the inhabitants of the Seneca village became members of the Deer Clan. Hunters were the teachers who carried on the Decree of Deerfoot. Soon, the people called them DEERFEET, THE RUNNERS.

It has been said that, as a result of this happening, the custom of sending messages through runners began.

Da Naho

NOTE: Louis Bennett, 1839-1895, a famous Seneca Indian runner and athlete, was known as "Deerfoot, the runner."

CANOE RACE

The Canoe Race is a favorite game of the DEER CLAN

1. Participants:

   Any number in a team

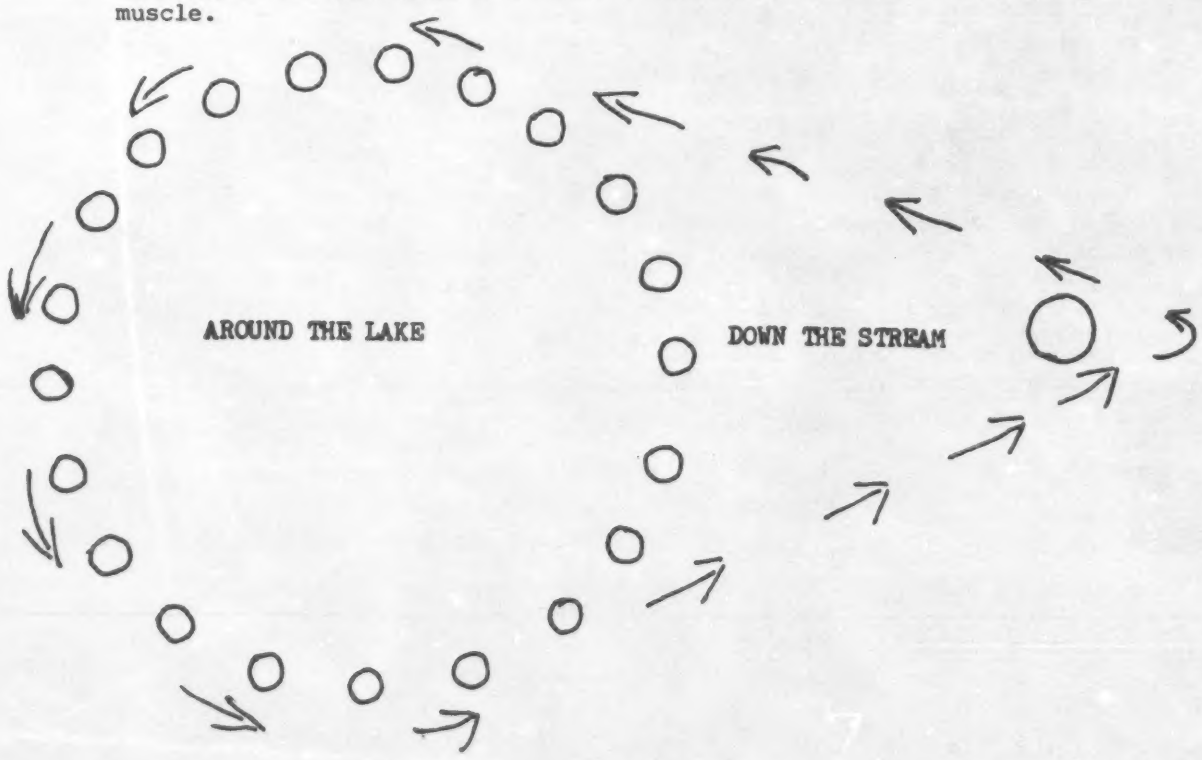
2. Procedure:

   Contestants sit in a circle. Everyone is facing in the same direction, grasping their crossed feet with their hands. The hands are never taken off of the feet until the game is over. Push the feet forward like oars. Pull the body up to the feet. The body is the canoe. Moving over the floor in this manner, floats the canoe. Everyone must try to move together, keeping the same distance and rhythm.

3. "Around the Lake." Starter follows the arrows "around the lake and down the stream." Circle the lake again and the game is over.

4. Fouls:
   Gaps are counted as fouls. This is a fun game because everyone is busy.

5. This game is a good physical fitness exercise. It uses almost every muscle.



THE HERON DECREE

FERTILIZATION

For many moons all creatures were living happily on the gifts provided by Mother-Earth. But time drew near for another important lesson to explain how to live in balance within Nature's surroundings.

The Senecas had enjoyed the large growth of their favorite foods called the "Three Sisters." The seeds were grown near the villages where they grew into large, wholesome plants. The "Three Sisters" were Corn, Beans and Squash.

However, after many moons, the Three Sisters appeared to be losing their strength and beauty. This puzzled the Senecas. Instead of the plants being filled with the properties for satisfying hungry appetites, they looked weak, spindly and lost their good taste.

The Three Sisters were unhappy about their condition and asked Mother Earth what they could do. Mother Earth told them not to worry because soon another Decree would unfold that would return them to good health. Shortly after, a storm visited them.

As the storm descended upon the land, heavy rains poured down on the sisters with such force it almost knocked them over. Winds followed the rains and churned the nearby waters so violently that the water clans (fish) were deposited on the banks. Many of them were left behind when the rivers returned to their own waterways.

Heron had lived along the bodies of water and noticed the struggling water-clans that had been stranded on the ground. The unusual sight puzzled the Heron. The Chief, accustomed to listening to Mother-Earth had heard her tell the Three Sisters of the coming Decree.

The Heron Chief called his Clan together and told them of what had happened to the water clans. While they listened to him, the surroundings became quiet. Through the silence they heard the following words:

"THE BALANCE OF NATURE REQUIRES THAT ALL THINGS ARE RENEWED.
PLACE THE WATER CLANS AMONG THE AILING THREE SISTERS. THEIR GIFTS
WILL RESTORE THE FADING HEALTH OF THE MAIDENS CORN, BEANS AND SQUASH."

"THE GREAT SPIRIT HAS SPOKEN."

After the heron chief had heard the message, an inspiration came to him. "Could it be that was the reason the water clans were tossed up on the land for him to see?" He ordered his Herons to collect water clans and place them at the feet of all the plants the Senecas were depending upon for food, especially the Three Sisters. Every heron from near and far busily obeyed the order of the heron chief.

Many moons later, when the Senecas came to harvest their crops, the plants were no longer weak and spindly, but strong, juicy and greater in size than anyone had seen before. There was great rejoicing about the healing of the plants.

The Senecas did not know what caused the change until the chief had a dream. In his dream, he saw the heron placing water clans at the feet of their plants. The Heron wanted to be honored for their service. This was the reason for the dream.

The Senecas arranged for a feast of thanksgiving to honor the heron for the service they had performed. Surrounding creatures and people were invited to eat the wholesome food. During the festivities, the Seneca Chief announced:

"From this day on, those of you who have eaten this wonderful food will become members of the Heron Clan and pass on the lesson of adding nourishment of Water Clans to the plants. They also need nourishment to be healthy."

ANOTHER LESSON HAS BEEN LEARNED,
TO A BETTER WAY OF LIFE.
MOTHER NATURE'S PERFECT PLAN
SPREADS PEACE AND HARMONY THROUGHOUT THE LAND.

Da Naho

SIT WRESTLE

Sit Wrestle is a favorite Contest of the HERON CLAN

1. Participants:

   Two challengers who are about the same size and weight. Boys or girls, or girl and boy.

2. Procedure:

   Challengers sit on the floor or ground, back to back with legs spread a little for balance. Arms are locked at elbows.

3. Object of the Contest:

   The object is to force the opponent's shoulder to the floor, then pull him up again and force the other shoulder to the floor. A time limit is usually one minute.

4. Foul:

   Legs and feet must remain on the floor. If they do not, that is considered a foul.

THE SNIPE DECREE

OBEDIENCE

The Chief of the Snipes was an honorable bird, who showed deep affection and understanding for his Clan. They lived along the shore of the clear, swift, rippling waters, "Oh-niga-aah," mingling with their neighbors in peace and harmony.

Oh-niga-aah curved through a land of forests and glens, sharing its food and refreshing water with those who lived along its shores. When the moon traveled the skytrail, young Senecas could be found resting their bronze bodies upon the soft, sand, listening to the murmuring song of the water as it flowed by.

From time to time, the Great Spirit had decreed gifts to His beings, teaching them lessons to be shared throughout Natureland. Life for the Snipes had been happy since they had learned how to use their gifts from the Creator. Obedience, one gift received by the Snipes, was practiced faithfully. Its importance and truths were taught from one generation to another. Whenever a Snipe council was held, the Chief reviewed the decree:

"SNIPE CHIEF:
YOUR GIFT IS A DECREE OF OBEDIENCE.
YOU SHALL TEACH THIS LESSON TO OTHERS
AS A TRUTH TO LIVE IN HARMONY!"

"THE GREAT SPIRIT HAS SPOKEN."

Since then, the Snipes had taught this Decree to all of their families. Meanwhile, the Chief watched the Senecas who lived in the nearby village. He wished that, one day the Snipes might teach them the same lesson.

It was the custom of the Senecas to hold contests that earned for their youth the title of "Braves." All neighboring Clans joined in these events. Following the contests, the Senecas held feasts of thanksgiving to honor the winners of the contests.

One night, before the events were scheduled, groups of visiting contestants were gathering along the shores of the swift waters. All children had been warned to respect the water that flowed so fast past their village. They had been told that a time in their training would come when swimming it safely could be earned. Great strength and bravery was required to cross the racing waters. All braves looked forward to achieving this great feat.

This time, the contest held special meaning, since the twins of the Seneca Chief were competing. Excitement buzzed around the Council fire.

It happened that across the river lived another Nation whose Chief boasted of sons with the same abilities. There was friendship between the sons in spite of their rivalry. Whenever the weather was warm the friends got together and slept along the shores at the water's edge. On this occasion, the night before the contest, the twins went to the river and signaled to their friends. Soon, they took their canoes and met on a tiny island that floated in the center of the river. Together they plotted to hold a contest of their own before the other events began. It was agreed, that the moment the Sun appeared above the rim of the skytrail was the signal for both sets of twins to plunge into the forbidden waters. When they reached the center of the stream, the would wrestle. The returning swimmers would win, and, before anyone else they would have become Braves. Satisfied with their plan, the twins returned to their village. It happened that the Snipe Chief overheard the secret and was very disturbed. "At last, we can teach the Senca boys a lesson on obedience," he thought. Quickly, he called a council of his Clan and announced:

"THE TIME FOR A DECREE HAS COME.
WE KNOW THE LESSON OF OBEDIENCE,
NOW, WE CAN TEACH IT TO THE SENECAS."

A message was sent to the Snipes across the river, telling them of the purpose for the lesson and how it would be taught.

In the meantime, the Seneca twins had returned to the water's edge to be ready to carry out their private contest. Across the river the neighboring boys had done the same.

When the boys were sound asleep, the Snipes gathered to wait for the signal of their Chief. They had been instructed to stand side by side around the sleeping boys with their beaks almost touching their bodies. At the time they awoke, they would jab their beaks into the boys, pinning them down to the ground.

The Snipes waited patiently all through the night. This would be a very important lesson on obedience. Snipes on the opposite shore were carrying out the same vigil. The signal was given when the Sun peeked above the rim of the Skytrail.

The moment the boys opened their eyes, sharp beaks were jabbed into their sides. Their terrified calls brought the whole village of Senecas to the water's edge. The sight that greeted the eyes of the people filled them with gales of laughter. This made the boys feel very foolish. After the Snipe Chief reported the reason for this strange action, the Senecas were grateful. The plan of the twins would have caused sorrow to visit the families of both Nations.

The Senecas immediately arranged for a feast of thanksgiving. Snipes from near and afar filled the air, singing their thrilled songs of joy. All the Clans who had come to the events were invited to join in the thanksgiving feast.

During the honoring festivities, the Seneca Chief proclaimed that those who were attending the feast would belong to the Snipe Clan and teach the lesson of obedience shared by the Snipes.

The Snipes were also grateful, since it was their spiritual inspiration that was responsible for fulfilling the Decree of the Great Spirit.

Da Naho

TURN THE STONE

Turn the Stone is a favorite game of the SNIPE CLAN

1. Equipment:

   A flat stone, large and smooth enough to place the hand over it so that the hand can turn on the stone easily.

2. Participants:

   A team game with any number of participants.

3. Procedure:

   Players sit in a circle. The circle must be large enough for the contestants to spreat out, full length, in the center.

4. The object of this Contest:

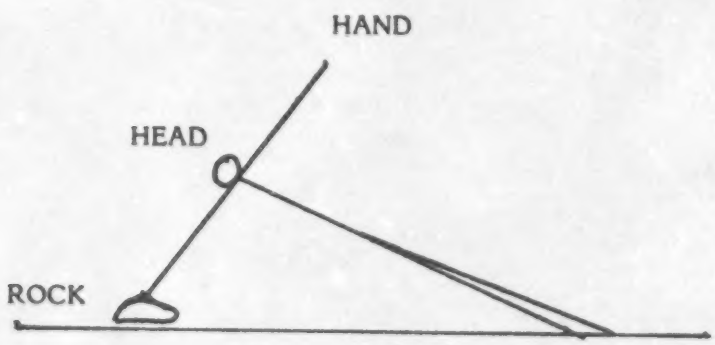
   The object of this contest is to use the "Little Eagle Spread" (see Hawk Clan) and walk around the stone on the sides of the feet, to complete a circle. The stone acts as the hub of the wheel. Each contestant takes a turn, moving in one direction. After everyone has had a turn, they reverse the direction.

5. Fouls:

   A) Body touching the ground
   B) Ball of feet running
   C) Bent knees
   D) Talking...This contest is done in SILENCE

6. Score:

   Team ending first with the least number of fouls, wins.



THE TURTLE DECREE

PURPOSEFULNESS

Many times the Sun smiled at the turtles as they rested on the soft, warm mud. One day, while the Turtle Chief was enjoying his favorite pastime, he saw something fall to the ground a short distance away. Being curious, he silently crept across the mud to see what it was. To his surprise, he found a young Seneca boy stretched on the hard, dry ground. He had seen this boy many times and even watched him play with his friends when there was water in the stream. He circled the boy, touching him ever too gently to arouse him but he didn't seem to move. Suddenly, he saw blood coming from a deep cut on his head. Immediately, the Chief knew he had to find a way to move the injured boy to the nearby village. He signaled to his brothers urging them to come as quickly as possible. After they gathered around him, he explained the importance of returning the boy to the Medicine People.

The Turtle Chief had a plan that might work. He told them they could carry the boy on their backs if they stood side by side, row in front of row. In this formation, they would burrow beneath the boy. The Turtles did as they were told. When they returned to the surface of the ground, the injured boy was lying across their backs. Slowly, they carried him across the ground to the village Medicine Lodge. The Senecas looked in amazement at the unusual sight as the Turtles entered the village. At once, the Medicine People cared for the wounded boy.

The parents of the boy were most grateful for the prompt and thoughtful action of the turtles and arranged for a feast of thanksgiving in their honor. When all preparations had been completed and the feast well underway, a stillness crept over everyone who was present. During this very quiet time, the "VOICE" of THE GREAT SPIRIT whispered the following message:

"TURTLE CHIEF....
DUE TO THE ACTIONS OF THOUGHTFUL PURPOSE
AND THE SAVING OF A YOUNG LIFE
YOUR WISDOM WILL GROW THROUGH PEACEFUL SERVICE
TO SOFTEN EVERY EARTHLY STRIFE."

The early Senecas never forgot the lesson of the turtles, especially knowing that it had been inspired by the Great Spirit. The people established a lasting tribute to the turtles by teaching the wisdom of living in harmony. The entire village joined the Turtle Clan and promised to practice the gifts of Thoughtful Purpose and the kinship to all creatures of Mother-Earth.

The story of the Turtles spread from one village to another and many came to join the Turtle Clan. The Turtles live to great age and among the Turtle Clan of the Senecas are many "People of Wisdom."

Da Naho

OVER PASS

Over Pass is the favorite game of the TURTLE CLAN

1. Equipment:

   A pouch containing seven items. The Senecas sometimes used stones, twigs, beads, feathers, scraps of leather, small bones or leaves. Today, we may use a plastic bag, paper clips, crayons, small pencils, colored beads, erasers and chalk, or whatever item that is handy.

2. Participants:

   This is a team game and can be played in the classroom, or outdoors as the Senecas do. All seven items are placed in the pouch.

3. Procedure:

   Team members are sitting in a circle, facing clockwise. Everyone listens as the items are listed only once. When the signal is given, the starter removes the items from the pouch and lines them up, according to the sequence he believes was given. Immediately, he passes them over his head with the right hand. He leaves the team to watch. If he passed the items correctly, then he scores a point. If not, there is no score. When the end member receives the items, he lines them up, according to the way he believes the sequence goes. Then, he passes them forward over the left shoulder of the one in front of him. He leaves the team. This procedure continues until there is one person left.

4. Fouls:

   This is a completely SILENT game

   A) No talking or laughing
   B) No turning of heads

   This is a contest of listening to instructions and correctly carrying them out. It is one of concentration and self-control.

THE CEREMONY OF THE FEATHER

The Ceremony of the Feather brings a series of contests to a close. At the conclusion of the eight contests, each Clan has a winner who represents the Clan. The other contestants sit around the Council Ring, according to the Clan positions, as on page 40. An official, or Game Chief, stands at the North, behind the narrator; the second Game Chief stands at the East; the third one stands at the South; and the last one stands at the West. The Game Chief at the North holds eight yellow feathers. Everyone is sitting except the Game Chiefs and the Narrator. Usually, the Narrator is the one who had achieved many honors. He opens the ceremony with the following information:

"The Senecas honor all Birds because they are beautiful, free creatures who fly into the Skyworld with such ease. They are the little brothers who help us to attain achievement. For this reason, we present this ceremony to the winning brothers and sisters, not only to honor them but to encourage them toward seeking greater heights of achievement."

Our little Bird brothers and sisters watch us, just as we watch them. Through this watching, our people have learned some interesting things about birds. We have learned that only they have feathers. Reptiles were the cousins of the birds and they have scales. After many generations and changes in the environment, the descendents of the Reptiles began to grow feathers. When we look at the legs of the Birds, we see that they still have scales to prove this interesting relationship. Our people tell legends about how the Birds came to be.

The feathers provided warmth. Senecas were amazed because they saw that, once the feathers had grown to full size and fell out, the Bird did not bleed or suffer pain. Some of our people tried to mend broken feathers but they would not heal. Soon they learned that, after the feather dropped off, a new one would take its place.

Another interesting observation the early Senecas made was that, in crushing a red feather, the color was still seen in the feather dust. A blue feather, when crushed, left a white dust. They found that only red, brown, black and yellow are found in bird feathers. The rest of the colors are reflections of light. A blue feather when held in the light looks brown.

In the symbolism of the ceremony, red demonstrates confidence and faith; black is for speed; brown is for great energy and endurance; and yellow represents achievement. In the center of the Council Ring is a basket in which there are eight leather thongs and several colored beads. The thongs represent unity and good fellowship. The beads link the talents of the contestants to their achievements. The ceremony now begins.

The representative winner of each Clan approaches the North and receives the Red feather. He then moves to the East and receives the Black feather. On to the South, where he takes his Brown feather; then to the West, where he is given the Yellow feather. He goes to the center of the Council Ring and sits down according to his Clan. After all have been seated, a signal is given, whereupon the contestants take a leather thong

and tie the four feathers together. When finished, they put four different colored beads on the ends of the thongs. The first one done stands. He is proclaimed the overall winner. Everyone else ties their thong of four feathers on his outstretched arms. The winner circles the Council Ring. After circling the Council Ring once, he returns to the center and each contestant unties his own feather award. All hold them up in the right hand, while they circle counter-clockwise. Having circled once, they sit down and the Narrator concludes:

"You have seen an example of confidence, faith, speed, endurance and achievement. These young people have used their gifts and developed talents and abilities. They are the ones who shall endure, so that our race shall live in harmony."

After the ceremony is over, the spectators and contestants join in a feast.

Should your group like to conduct this ceremony, you can find an ample supply of feathers for your winners by looking on the ground beneath the trees. The Senecas did not kill the birds for their feathers.

APPENDIX

THE FIREFLY AND THE BEAR

Cast: Nyouh-kwai.....The Bear
The Firefly
Several Bears
Narrator
Place: The forest

Narrator:

It was a hot day and the Sun smiled upon Nyouh-kwai, the Bear, as he walked into the cool woods. He pawed the earth, scratching into the damp ground before he curled up into a furry ball. Sleep crept into his body as he cuddled close to Mother-Earth.

Firefly:

Move off of me!
I'm not a flea,
You great big stuffy Bear!
You crush my leg
and squeeze my head
And rumple up my hair."

Narrator:

Nyouh-kwai raised his head to listen...then stretche his legs, and rolled over on his side.

Nyouh-kwai:

I think I hear, in my ear
A funny little flutter.
If someone's there, in my fur
Why don't you give a mutter?

Narrator:

Nyouh-kwai listened and there was no answer.

Nyouh-kwai:

Oh Foof! It must be a flea.

Narrator:

Suddenly, with a flash, stood a firefly right at the front of his face. Nyouh-kwai blinked his eyes and stared.

Nyouh-kwai:

It's plain to see
You're not a flea,
You're a brilliant firefly.
I crushed your leg
And squeezed your head.
I'm sorry. Please don't cry.

Narrator:

The Firefly stared into Nyou-kwai's face as if he wanted a big favor.

Firefly:

Will you be my frined?
I can live in your den.

Nyouh-kwai:

You can be my friend
But it's cold in my den.
You may ride on my head
And sleep there instead.

Narrator:

The Firefly was used to sleeping during the day because he worked at night. But because he wanted to be with his new friend, he stayed awake while the Bear romped, played and hunted. The Firefly did not tell Nyouh-kwai how sleepy he was getting as he bounced and tumbled. Besides, he had to stay awake so that he could hang onto Nyouh-kwai's head.
(Nyouh-kwai suddenly howls in great pain)

Nyouh-kwai:

Oh me! Oh my!
My eye! My eye!
Help me, little Firefly?

Narrator:

The Firefly thought and thought what could have caused his friend such pain. (Firefly looks into the eye of the Bear)

Firefly:

It's plain to see, you're stung by a bee
And very soon, you will not see!
Please don't cry,
My plan we'll try.

Nyouh-kwai:

Listen to me!
Can't you see
My stomach will get empty,
Though food will still be plenty.

Firefly:

We'll hunt by the moon
And find food quite soon.
I'll ride on your nose,
While my light glows
And other Bears are sleeping,
Good food you'll be eating.

Narrator:

Day after day, Nyouh-kwai and the Firefly slept while the other Bears still romped and played and hunted for food. Soon, they missed Nyouh-kwai their hungry relative. When they saw him one day, he seemed as fat as ever except that he had a swollen eye.

After awhile, they became curious, especially when one of the bears heard Nyouh-kwai talking to someone. They looked around and didn't see anyone. Every day they watched Nyouh-kwai's den and reported that he slept all day long. "How was he eating?" they asked each other.

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